



MANY people have asked why Mr. Macmillan's address to the nation was scheduled as a party political broadcast when he could have called it a Ministerial broadcast and saved his party a fixture. The explanation is that he felt that with the authority of the party machinery behind him he was less likely to find himself confronted by Eamonn Andrews and told that This Was His Life.

Deeds, Not Words

THE appeal, by the chairman of Liverpool's library committee, for a higher standard of physical fitness in the city's library attendants—it appears that they are frequently beaten up by hooligan ticket-holders—will arouse



sympathy among the general public. "Alsatian dogs would be of help," said the chairman, which only shows how bad things have got. Among library attendants elsewhere, however, in cities where the maximum output of violence is a raised eyebrow at an infringement of the "Silence" rule, the reaction is one of envy. When a man has spent twenty years surrounded by the insubstantial menace of characters from Raymond Chandler, Ernest Hemingway and Erle Stanley Gardner he gets pretty sick of his daily queue of softies. Only let one of them hit him with a bit of hosepipe, and what a grand catharsis he would feel as he loosed the wolfhound out of the educational text-book section!

Little John's Other Island

RECENT disturbances on the Eire-Northern Ireland border have introduced

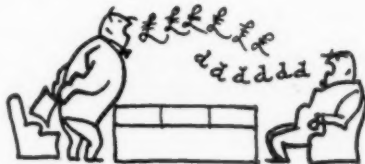
our schoolchildren to the Irish Problem for the first time, and it is important that they should understand the rights and wrongs of it. In describing the pro-Union dynamiters as "outlaws" the *Daily Mail* must have misled thousands of youngsters who spend every Sunday afternoon in I.T.A.'s Sherwood Forest and to whom the word means a lot of decent, big-hearted, open-air chaps scoring off a spoil-sport sheriff.

"X" Marks the Jack-pot

MEXICO's first international conference on "motion picture culture" closed the other day, after a week's viewing that brought charges of "immorality" and "undermining influence" against many films. Also a vote of sympathy from their jubilant makers for the exhibitors of three films, who were given awards for "high moral content."

Back to the Wind Tunnel

DELICATELY timed to appear just before Parliament reassembled, the report of the Select Committee on Estimates was, as *The Times* headlined



it, "critical of air expenditure." Committee members may have noted that this produced no discernible economy in the amount expended during last week's debates.

Bolt Shot

MRS. NAI GAM SAMRAM sat down to dinner with her husband in Bangkok, says a Reuter report, and made a remark so amusing that Mr. Samram

fell dead in a convulsion, but when people began to telephone to ask what the joke was she had to confess that she had now forgotten, and could say nothing but "I think a wife should always be ready with a cheery word." This was small satisfaction for the eager inquirers, many of whom hoped to pass on the story to relations and business competitors.

Dividend

CENTURIES of wise saws about the evils of wealth have been vindicated in all directions by the news that an



Ipswich mental patient who won £30,000 on the pools received an immediate visit from relations he hadn't seen for twenty-six years.

Always a Catch Somewhere

WHO are the highest paid people in Britain? asks the *Daily Sketch*, boosting the new competition in which it undertakes to pay the winner's income-tax for the rest of his life. The Prime Minister, it goes on, gets £10,000 a year, the Solicitor-General gets £7,000, the chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue gets £6,000, and so on, and they are all, in short, eligible to enter the competition, in which "if they win they can have their net income doubled." It is only fair to point out, though, that the Prime Minister starts under a handicap; the poor fellow gets the first £4,000 of his income tax free.

Guaranteed Unreal

ORLON, Perlon, Nylon... Dacron, Acrilan, Miliun... No wonder, as a

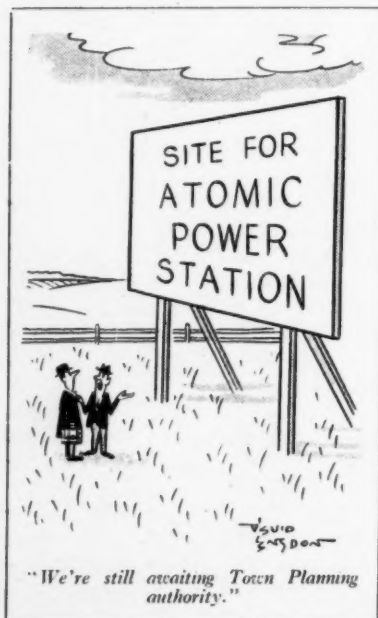
fashion writer points out, that among the welter of artificial fabrics a woman no longer knows what her clothes or curtains are made of. Ardil, it is true, is made of ground nuts, and Fibrolaine from casein, but without getting them under a spectroscope who can guess the composition of Agilon? Sereno? Celon? Dylan? Though the last, of course, might be a mixture of milk and wood.

Gone to Earth

THE League Against Cruel Sports complained when a hunting horn was sounded and a fox's brush thrown into the grave at the funeral of a former Master of Foxhounds that "this was the introduction of a practice into the Christian burial service which is more reminiscent of a beastly pagan rite of a bygone age." The British Field Sports Society quickly came out with a counter protest; but the League is still a short head in front. They showed remarkable tolerance in their tacit admission that a M.F.H. ought to be given Christian burial.

Belloc, Thou Shouldst Be Living . . .

THE accursed power that stands on privilege,
And goes with petrol, gall and verbiage,
Broke, and democracy resumed her thrall—
Which goes with petrol, verbiage and gall.



STAR CHAMBER

MYSELF: Mr. Chairman, your Honour, my Lords, Purple Rod, and the gentleman in the full-bottomed wig—

CHAIRMAN: Be so good as to address the Committee of Privileges in a proper manner.

MYSELF: I am a humble man, your Worships and Gentlemen all, little accustomed by birth or training to the company of those who, in virtue, intellect, blood, bearing and salary are far—

CHAIRMAN: You will be given an opportunity to prostrate yourself later. What's the first move, Reggie?

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Tell him what he is charged with.

CHAIRMAN: That is certainly a most liberal, not to say democratic, suggestion. You are charged then, miserable man, with a gross breach of Parliamentary Privilege—

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: *Prima facie*.

MYSELF: Oh, no. Not that. Anything but that.

CHAIRMAN: —with a *prima facie* breach of privilege, in that you did, in a scandal-sheet known as the *Brackhurst, Cheesing and Upper Tunbury Signal*, make overt and calumnious reference to a Member of the House of Commons, to wit the Member for Huckleberry (North), in the manner following, that is to say, "pompous windbag," thereby tending to bring the whole house into contempt and, ah—What's the word I'm after?

CLERK EXTRAORDINARY TO THE COMMITTEE AND KEEPER OF THE KEYS OF THE TOWER: Derogating.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you. —derogating against—

CLERK: From.

CHAIRMAN: I am greatly obliged. —and derogating from the dignity power, might, glory, respect, and reputation for elevated, succinct and witty oratory, of Her Majesty's Parliament in Commons assembled. You may now apologize—and in saying that, I am in no way prejudging the issue.

A MEMBER: On a point of order. Now that this stunted hack has adopted a kneeling posture I notice that the turn-ups of his trousers are grossly frayed at the back. Is not his appearance

before us improperly arrayed in itself a *prima facie* piece of impertinence?

CHAIRMAN: Very likely. But we must get on. We still have to deal with the *Shropshire Mercury*, *Lloyd's Register*, the Editor of the *Boy's Own Paper*, four cartoonists, and a Mrs. Alice Tipping of Droitwich. And more coming in. Let the manikin speak.

MYSELF: It has always been the policy of the *Brackhurst, Cheesing and Upper Tunbury Signal*, which I had until yesterday the honour to represent, to revere the House of Commons, both collectively and individually, with a devotion akin to idolatry. Rather than offend by a single thoughtless word against that noble assembly, there is not a member of the *Signal's* staff, from editor to office-boy, who would not gladly hew off his right hand and cast it into the reeking basket reserved for Prynne's ears, Leighton's—

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Take care.

MYSELF: I am under great nervous strain. When, in a moment of madness, I applied the words complained of to the non-existent Member for a fictitious constituency—

CHAIRMAN: This is a most serious development. Is there, in fact, no Member for Huckleberry (North)?

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The matter will be looked into. In my submission, however, the offence will be, if anything, aggravated, should this loathsome scribbler's apologia prove correct. To attribute to a fictitious person, who has *ipso facto* no shadow of right to bear them, the letters M.P., perhaps the most honoured and most jealously guarded suffix in the long and glorious history of the Constitution, is in itself a breach of privilege so gross that words almost fail me. Not quite, however. So damaging a blow, struck wantonly—

MYSELF: No more. Take me away. Let my trunk be dismembered, and the pieces affixed, as a warning to others, on the spikes of Palace Yard. Henceforward I vow to insult only the Lords.

CHAIRMAN: A very proper attitude. Will Wednesday, at four sharp, be a convenient time for you to be reprimanded at the Bar?

MYSELF: I should like it above all things.

H. F. E.





JANUARY 2. Rang Fonteyn at 9.0, 10.0, 11.0 and 12.0. Got her at 1.0. She sounded rather like Mummy did last Christmas when Douglas poured all that gin into her orangeade, very bright and giggly about nothing. I don't think she remembered me when I said it was Mavis Bone speaking, but then I reminded her about the camera test and she said "Lord yes, the bonnie Bone" and shrieked with laughter. When she had dried up a bit she gasped "I know it's ghastly for you, pet, but could you just keep yourself on ice a teeny bit longer? Pox . . ." and I thought she was going to explode again, "... he's got a rare falcon disease and he's *itching* all over." Thunder-claps of mirth. "He can't keep his clothes on and he's got to lie in a tepid bath. We've been at his house all morning but he won't see a soul. Just hands whisky round the bathroom door. Traumatic." And she rang off.

Rang Douglas to tell him I wouldn't be in the West End for lunch after all. He said "I told you it was all a hoax," which isn't true as he is just as excited as I am about my being a discovery.

Went to Public Library to find a book on fashion modelling. All out except one on careers for women with Modelling squashed in between Midwifery and Needlecraft. Got two chocolate bars and shut myself in my room to pore over the book. Ate first bar and read first sentence. "The intending model must rigorously eschew all sweet and starchy foods." Gave second bar to Jenny (my kid sister, that is). The next sentence was "Remove your clothes and stand in front of a long mirror. Examine yourself with the merciless eye of an outsider." Honestly!!! Suppose Mrs. Entwistle had come in to do my room! Anyway, I measured myself in all directions

instead. It then said you must make a list of your measurements and colour scheme and that this should be enclosed in all correspondence with prospective employers, and stuck on to the back of all photographs. I copied out twenty of these lists and will affix one below to make me laugh when I'm an old lady.

Height	...	5ft. 9½ins.
B.	...	34
W.	...	24
H.	...	38
Hair	...	Yellow (long, straight)
Eyes	...	Green

B, W and H stand for bust, waist and hips, but apparently you don't even have to put that. 34-24-38 tells the experts all they want to know (in my case more than they want to know, perfection being 34-21-34).

The chapter ended by saying that the final test of whether you had the stamina to be a model was whether you could spend a quarter of an hour before breakfast every morning just applying your lipstick. I must say it was pretty difficult. Even with drawing the outline of a smile first, filling in with two shades, darker for top and lighter for bottom, waiting, blotting, reapplying, rewaiting, reblotting and ending with a coat of fixative (so that it won't come off when you kiss people), I had still only taken 7½ minutes. Never mind. I'm sure I'll get slower.

January 3. Rang *Fable*. Pox still itching.

January 4. Rang *Fable*. Pox still itching. Fonteyn distraught because something's eating the violets on the "Spring Music" set and they're borrowed. I suppose she meant that erection of telegraph wires I saw in the studio on Monday. French film with Douglas. He proposed again.

January 5. Can't hold up my career any longer so rang Dolores. Dolores,

believe it or not, has become a model, and, according to Janey, she's making oodles of dough at it. She was looking gaunt and adenoidal all over the cover of the *August Fable*, and she had just taken an outsize bite out of a red apple on this week's *Lady's Own*. The two pictures look like one of those before-and-after dos. The funny thing is that she was at the same school as me (in a higher form of course) and she wasn't a bit like a model then. Her name was Mildred but everybody called her Snort which just suited her. She was very long and thin and untidy, and in lax shorts (school word for lacrosse) and boots her legs looked like the Guinness ostrich's neck, the glass stuck half-way down her being her knees. Her best subjects were Divinity and Dissection. She was discovered by an American photographer at the South Bank Pavilion of Industry where she was demonstrating rowing machines. (Her younger sister, Snort II, has been waiting to be discovered ever since.)

Well anyway I rang Snort, I mean Dolores (must remember) and she sounded definitely more like the *Fable* cover than the *Lady's Own*. She said she had a hangover and what the hell did I want to get mixed up in the filthy rag trade for. If she had her time over again she'd stick to chicken sexing, etc. I went on making encouraging noises and she eventually spooned out a few facts. "Model," she said, was a damn silly word anyway as it covered a multitude of sins including girls who stick snapshots outside tobacconists in South Kensington (studio camera and all mod. con. provided).

"You've got to make up your mind which kind of clothes-horse you aim to be, the portable or the fixed variety. The portables, commonly known as mannequins (the word's madly unchic

at present), show off clothes to customers, which means changing three hundred times a day and walking and smiling continuously from 9.0 to 5.0 with a break for lunch, if they're lucky. The other variety, photographic models, only smile when the camera clicks and obviously anyone but a moron would rather be a photographic model."

She then did some prolonged yawning over the telephone (jolly rude, I thought) and said in a very low voice "Of course, you know, you've got to be deformed. Hips down to the bust I mean." I was trying to work this one out when she explained that in the normal female the hips measure ten inches more than the bust, but in a model they must be the same. (I remembered 34-24-38 with despair.) "Assuming Ma Nature made this slip for your benefit and that you're fool enough to want to become a mannequin (Gawd help you), spend £25 on a six-weeks' training course and don't listen to stories about people who walk into Dior's salon and get taken on. If you've fallen for the photographic racket, get done by the best man in town (£40), order twenty enlargements and hawk them round all the other shutter-snappers. You'll never see *them* again, so just jerk back the odd tear if they cost you £2 a go. And remember. Let your pretty mug appear once above a well-filled bra and you've had it, chum. Leave corsets to the stooges. Bye," and she was gone. Mr. Pocton in his tepid bath seems a very long way away.

SUSAN CHITTY

Dispensation

Visitors to St. Mary's, Southampton, who pick up a telephone in the church can hear a three-minute sermon recorded by the rector.

SERMONS in 'phones reflect the trend

For using electronics
To fill the body of the church
With stimulating tonics:
Why not confess by dictaphone?
It sounds a trifle sordid
Until you think that, anyhow,
Your sins will be recorded.

ANTHONY BRODE



Speed While You Read

By TOM GIRTIN

I HAPPENED to be sitting in an Executive's waiting-room the other day, thumbing through his file of B.A.C.I.E. reports, when I came across the news that at last a Course is being held to teach Big Businessmen how to read quickly enough to absorb all the paper that daily arrives on their desks. Of the advisability of letting such men read everything they are supposed to I say nothing, merely commenting that as far as I am concerned this is old hat. It must, in fact, be at least twelve months since I was confronted by a man called Robert M. Bear, Ph.D., who, deliberately trailing his coat, opened his attack by writing

"At the end of this Article you ought to be reading twice as fast as at the start!"

I am never slow to accept a challenge of this sort. I took out my watch, placed it on the arm of my chair and plunged avidly into *Speed While You Read*:

"When he entered Dartmouth Nelson, handsome and lanky, was a sluggardly reader. A hundred and seventy five words a minute was his top speed . . ."

Here I paused to consider this statement: although the Napoleonic Wars are not really "my period" I was tolerably certain that there was something not quite right about this pen-picture of the Hero of the Nile. I struggled out of my chair, picked my watch up off the floor, and went grumbling upstairs to find the Encyclopædia. MUSHR-OZON, once I had managed to tear myself away from the *Neo-kantianism* of Wilhelm Windleband over whom I stumbled by accident, was no help at all: it neither mentioned Nelson's physical appearance nor his reading habits. DAMASCU—EDUC, however, informed me that Dartmouth College was an

"institution of higher education for men in Hanover, New Hampshire. Congregational by origin but actually non-sectarian . . ."

It put quite a different aspect on the whole affair and I returned, feeling vaguely resentful, to *Speed While You Read*.

At this point I had read twenty-four words of the article in seventeen minutes, eight seconds, and it seemed

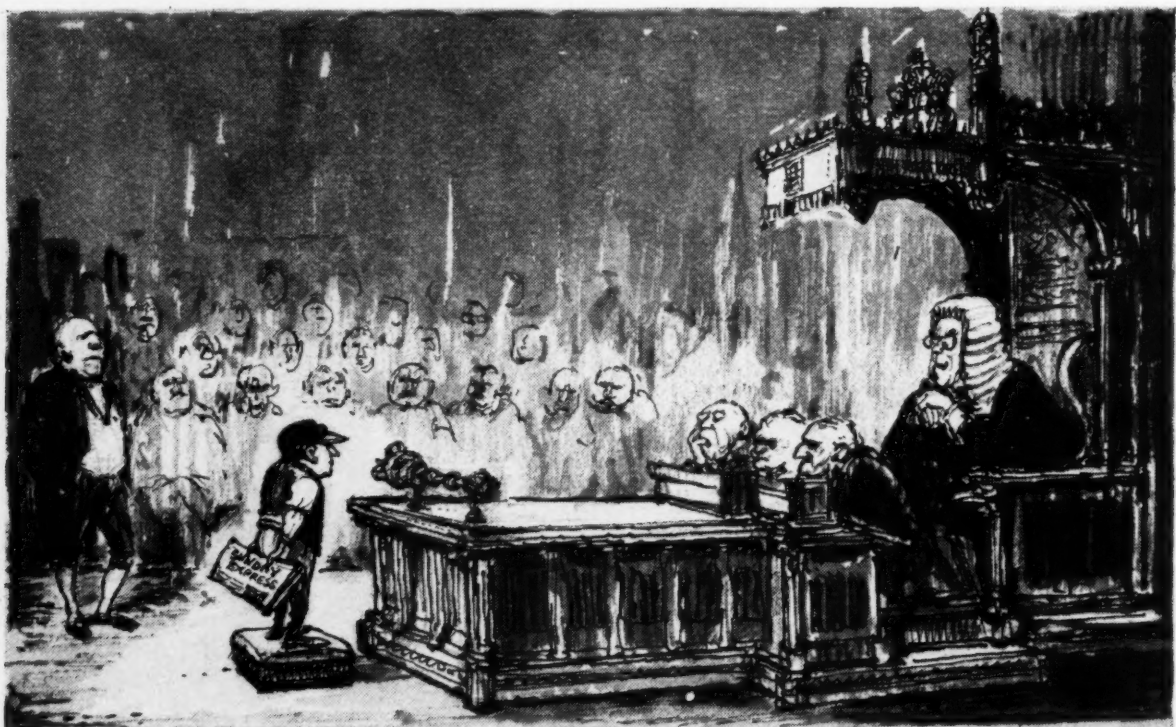
quite easy to double this rate of scoring. Though I modestly doubted whether I should ever catch up with Nelson. For in spite of the fact that

"'I've always read mighty slow' he drawled 'an' I reckon it's too late to start now,' a month or two later a speed and comprehension test shewed he was now reading 390 words a minute. 'Golly!' Nelson murmured in self-admiration, 'Imagine me being as smart as that.'"

This was a fatal invitation. I took my mind off the article and imagined Nelson. I found I could see him quite clearly. Handsome and lanky, he was walking with a friend across a campus surrounded by Fraternity houses which though actually non-sectarian were in the Waterhouse Congregational manner. He was being shunned by a number of pretty co-eds wearing mortar-boards and carrying rolled diplomas.

"Why do they treat me like I was poison-ivy?" he was drawling.

And his friend, horribly embarrassed, was answering "Well—er—Nelson, you see a hundred and seventy-five words a minute is not enough." In the last



"When did you last see your proprietor?"

picture, of course, Nelson was having his cheek stroked in the moonlight by a drum-majorette and thinking "Thanks to Robert M. Bear."

I had now read seventy-one words in a fraction over thirty-five minutes, a palpable worsening of my performance, when Dr. Bear drew my attention to

"the fundamental rule for increasing speed: for five minutes every day for a month force yourself to read a little faster than is comfortable. Don't worry if you miss the exact meaning of a phrase, sentence or, even, a paragraph. Plow ahead and let the niceties of expression go hang."

I had no intention of falling for that advice: misapprehension had got me tangled with the Encyclopædia once in an evening.

"Read silently for five minutes, count the words and divide by five. Unless the result is at least 175 you are almost certainly a word-for-word reader."

I could not help flushing angrily at this caddish insinuation and half rose impetuously to my feet before I decided that it would, on the whole, be more dignified to ignore it. I continued warily

"Ask a friend to watch your lips while you read to yourself. The word-for-worder often keeps his lips in motion."

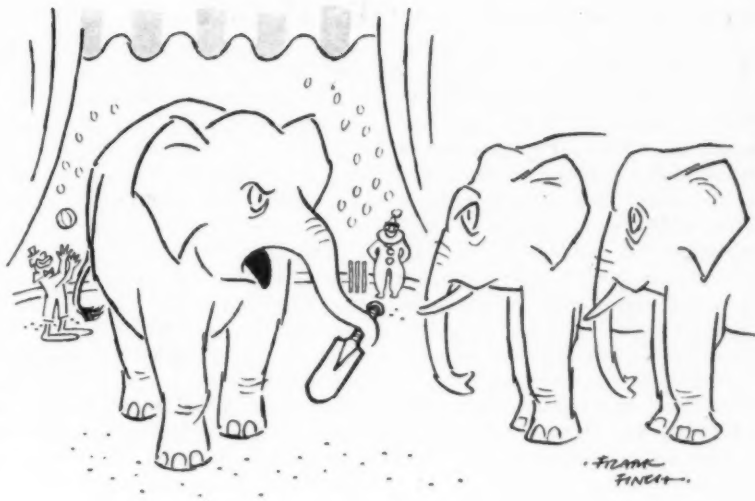
I put the article down again on my knee, closed my eyes and, gritting my teeth, began to run through a list of my friends making imaginary 'phone calls, without moving my lips, to the more likely ones.

"I say, Freddie, would you mind very much if I came over: I've got a little job I'd be grateful if you . . . Why, yes! Now! Right away! Well it's not as late as all that is it? I mean it would only take you about five minutes. Well, actually, it's rather difficult to explain!"

Kitt-Chat

ON Friday I finished reading Miss Kitt's autobiography,* then telephoned her agent. The agent said "She's making a film at Elstree. Shooting finishes to-night. Miss Kitt goes into the country for the

* *Thursday's Child*, by Eartha Kitt, Cassell, 16/-



"L.B.W. again."

Unthinkable! Fortunately there was an alternative:

"Read silently with your finger-tips on your vocal chords. If you feel them trembling you are vocalizing—pronouncing the words in your throat."

I fiddled about for some time looking quite unsuccessfully for my vocal chords. They seemed far out of reach of anything but a button-hook and by that time my eyes were watering so freely that I could scarcely see what the Professor was saying. He had, in fact, reached the boasting, extrovert, unsolicited testimonial stage:

"Recently the father of one of my students sent me a letter. 'When my son arrived home' he wrote 'he gave the whole family a reading test and set out to teach us all he had learned about reading at College. In the last month my own capacity has risen from 290 to 550 words a minute. Thanks for giving an old duffer like me the feeling that he is still in the process of education: I am reading almost twice as many good magazines and books.'"

That of course is the danger-point of the whole scheme. It becomes a matter of pure logistics in which the necessity of laying in vast stores of literature for the week-ends becomes of paramount importance. Any failure is apt to lead to the exploration of some rather curious Byways of English Letters. A lightning glance at my List of Books Read shows that, caught short one wet week-end, I actually read—though not necessarily in this order—the Reverend C. G. Rowe's immortal *Mind Whom You Marry: or The Gardener's Daughter; Hours with Girls* by the anonymous author of *Splendid Times; Living It Down* by Laura M. Lane (author of *My Sister's Keeper*); the Reverend C. E. Stone's ever-relevant *Cloister and Closet: a Plea for Private Meditation*; and *Polished Corner Stones*. I remember that the last upon my list—*What Put My Pipe Out: or Incidents in the Life of a Clergyman*—just carried me through till the Library opened.

By CHARLES REID

week-end. Back at the Mayfair Hotel on Monday. You'll get her there."

Saturday morning a national daily saw Miss Kitt emplane, London Airport, for a ski-ing holiday in Switzerland. She missed several 'planes while officials checked her papers, reported the gossip, then sighed "Thank goodness I'm off!"

Monday, hoping against hope, I telephoned the Mayfair. There she was at the other end of the line, her purr as large as life and twice as feline. Remarkably snappy ski-ing holiday, I ventured. Miss Kitt had no comment on this but made it clear she'd be happy to see me. To-morrow at one, she

suggested. It was nice of me to wanna interview her.

At one sharp I stood in her drawing-room. Miss Kitt walked wordlessly by in bright tomato with pleated skirt. She stared me full and indignantly in the eye as though I was the man she'd been told about who takes pence from blind beggars' tins and robs clubfooted orphans of Nat. Savings Certs. Her mouth was a circumflex accent. Her eyes were a smouldering petty sessions.

The telephone was off the hook. Miss Kitt said peremptory things into it and hung up. A young jeweller knelt by her chair with a bracelet of what looked like gold dollars and showed how he was going to remount them. Miss Kitt listened laconically.

At last the interview got going. I babbled of the things her recorded singing had done at, for and with me. Not all of them nice, therapeutic things. In *The Heel* she spits out the syllables like hot lead:

*Where a kitten cried to-night
A panther waits to claw and bite.*

In *Monotonous* her voice is the down-swooping siren of a homicide-squad car coming to rest at a slumtown kerb. Automatically I feel for my holster and make for the roof. In *Let's Do It* there are touches not of what you'd call

humanity, exactly, but let us say of *cov humana*. That tortuous tremolo of hers turns love into le-e-e-r-a-ahve.

"Extraordinary. Never heard anything like it before."

"I'm no ordinary person," confirms Miss Kitt, who has been scowling all this while at her crossed feet. "I'm an INDIVIDUAL, not a copyist. The fact that I'm an INDIVIDUAL speaks for itself. I've set a precedent. I've proved that the INDIVIDUAL can survive in this commercial world."

[Survival? As a child Miss Kitt picked cotton in the South. As a girl she worked in a New York garment factory. By 1954 she was earning 10,000 dollars a week at Las Vegas, a fact which so bemuses her that in her book she mentions it twice, first on p. 230, then on p. 237. Is survival quite the word?]

"But surely," I object, "everybody who makes a name in show business has something of his own to sell, something that marks him off from the herd, something that makes him an INDIVIDUAL, in short?"

"Not necessarily. Take Elvis Presley and people of that sort. There are fifty million Elvis Presleys in the world. The only thing that makes him different from the others is that he has a good

manager. It was Presley's manager who made Presley rise to the top."

"Let's come nearer to your own field. Take Lena Horne. Would you call her an INDIVIDUAL?"

"Yes, Miss Horne is an INDIVIDUAL."

"And Ella Fitzgerald?"

"Ella Fitzgerald *was* an INDIVIDUAL. She is so no longer. A good many people have copied her singing. That robs her of INDIVIDUALITY."

"But the artist of INDIVIDUAL talent or genius always *towers* above his imitators. Doesn't Pablo Picasso prove that?"

Miss Kitt, addressing her toes, didn't think so in the least.

Being *an* INDIVIDUAL is hard, admittedly. You usually end, once you start, by being at least two. That there are several Kitts is shown by her multiple prose style. Style A (p. 81):

The sound of his music box [the reference is to Josh White's guitar] twanged my womanliness. It edged my senses and wined my bittered blood. I watched his hands as they told of love and hatred, of sensuous love and faithless women. His mouth moved as though he was making love to the words as he spoke. His eyes dimmed with "Come hither, so that I may suck you in."

Style B (p. 133):

A few months before the end of our London engagement I was introduced to a very handsome boy who took a fancy to me . . . An extraordinarily handsome son-of-a-gun . . . I liked being with him because I thought he was a perfect gentleman. He never tried any fancy business on me. I was hoping he would stay like this. For the duration of the time we were in London he never made a false move, which I was more than happy about.

These passages I suitably intoned. Then a thought struck me, as thoughts will. Could the difference between Style A and Style B proceed from a difference of hands?

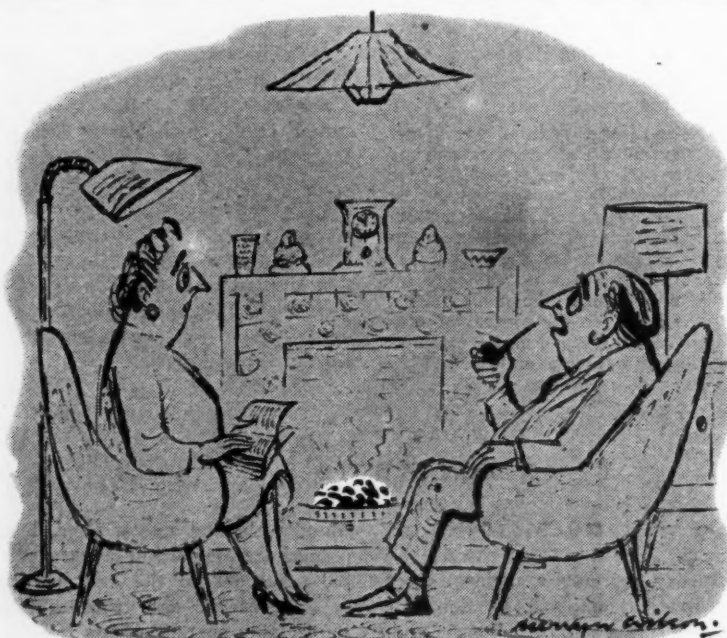
"Did anybody help you to write your book?" I asked. "Is it in part ghosted?"

"I don't have anything to say."

"But the variations of style, Miss Kitt—"

"I didn't think about style or form. I wrote the way I felt at the time I was writing."

I picked up my hat and thanked Miss Kitt for her attention. Weighing the participate with nicety, Miss Kitt said she had found my questions challenging. When I left she was still considering her crossed feet. I, too, find them pretty.



"It's a purely temporary and local failure, dear. Absolutely nothing to do with Lord Mills."



Greasy Joan

By ALEX ATKINSON

(Mr. Graham Greene is said to have written a film script for "St. Joan")

A RUINED hut on the south bank of the Loire, at six o'clock in the morning of May 29, 1429. Through a hole in one wall the fever-haunted river-bank may be seen, with a pennon on a lance sticking up drunkenly out of the mud. The pennon shakes fitfully in a bitter east wind. It is dark and smelly in the hut. In one corner an old rat is sniffing at a chunk of bread and the dregs of some stale wine. In another corner JOAN stands beside her flea-ridden pallet of straw, wearing long male underpants and a kind of gym-vest. She has just got up, and is putting on her armour. Her eyes are full of sleep but she has very good legs. DUNOIS pretends not to watch her dress with furtive pleasure. He is already dressed, but he hasn't shaved. His PAGE, a dwarf of eleven or twelve, squats in a puddle on the floor, looking through the hole in the wall at the pennon and occasionally gibbering to himself. He hasn't shaved.

JOAN: Saint Catherine was here again last night.

DUNOIS: Anything fresh?

JOAN (doggedly): She said the wind would change.

DUNOIS: She's been saying that for three days now, and Saint Margaret gave you her solemn word.

JOAN: Oh, what a pair we are to try to change a wind! They say you're a bastard, Jack. What do they say I am?

DUNOIS: Well . . . you know what people are like.

JOAN (fastening on her armour with her back to him): They're wrong. I'm not wicked enough, that's the whole trouble. Why should God change his wind for silly little me, with my silly little sins? They're not even worth repenting. Do you think they are?

DUNOIS (stiffly): I'm sure I couldn't say.

JOAN (mischievously): Now, Jack—beware the sin of complacency. You sound like one of the goddams.

DUNOIS: You little devil! (He grabs her to him.) Temptress! Vixen! Oh, Maid, I'd sooner take you than take Orleans, any day. (He tries to kiss her, and their gravy-stained armour clangs and scrapes together.)

PAGE (excitedly, looking at the river): Oh! See! A kingfisher!

DUNOIS (snarling): Be quiet!

PAGE (sadly): It isn't, after all. It's only a carrion crow.

A gross PRIEST comes to the doorway. He hasn't shaved either.

PRIEST (hopefully): Are you coming to church to pray for a wind to-day, Maid?

DUNOIS: Stop leering at her!

PRIEST: I'm not leering at her, Jack.

JOAN (throwing herself at his feet): Oh, Father, it's no good my

praying any more. I'm just not bad enough for God to bother with.

PRIEST (*absently, looking round for bottles*): You must try, child.

JOAN (*impatiently*): You don't know what I'm saying!

PRIEST: That's not important. God knows what you're saying, but it's the Church that gives the responses.

JOAN: Some of the saints had whopping great sins, didn't they, Father? Liars, and thieves, and murderers?

PRIEST (*taking snuff*): Certainly not.

PAGE (*sneezing*): Ah-tcha!

JOAN: They gave short change, they peeped through keyholes, they neglected their parents. And then, purged by the searing fires of self-doubt, they virtuously accepted God's mercy, joined an Order, bossed it, saw ghosts, and went up to heaven to spend the rest of eternity interceding for those who can only manage tiny sins, like me.

PRIEST: Exaggeration will get you nowhere. Besides, you are not a saint. Presumption is your greatest sin, child: perhaps it will suffice. (To DUNOIS): You haven't a drop of Burgundy?

DUNOIS (*furiously*): Don't speak to me of Burgundy, or by Saint Denis—

PRIEST: Good morning. (To JOAN): Try harder, child. You'll have your miracle yet. (*He winks, and goes.*)

DUNOIS: Each morning he comes a little earlier, hoping to catch you in your shift.

JOAN: Oh, how frustrating everything is! (*She sits on her pallet and looks out at the pennon, still fluttering miserably in the east wind.*)

DUNOIS (*sitting beside her*): There must be a way. I wonder if we could enter Orleans by the sewers?

JOAN (*stubbornly*): No. There has to be a miracle. The wind must change, and we must cross the Loire.

DUNOIS: Tell me about your sins.

JOAN: Only if you promise not to tell me about yours—it's worse than operations.

DUNOIS: I promise.

JOAN: When I was sixteen a cowhand at Toul sued me for breach of promise.

DUNOIS: Did you enjoy it?

JOAN: No. I was egged on by the voices, but personally I thought the whole thing in rather bad taste. To make matters worse, I won the case.

DUNOIS: That wasn't much of a sin.

JOAN: Next, I took to wearing men's clothes. Cast-offs, you know, and just for fun: but the joke soon wore thin, and now that I have to do it I can't bear trousers.

DUNOIS: Oh, if only it had been a perversion! (*Hopefully*): What about De Baudricourt at Vaucouleurs?

JOAN: Bob? Well, I sat on his knee once, and let him stroke my face, but I hated every minute of it. Still I got what God wanted: permission to go to Chinon.

DUNOIS: Oh, but that was far too easy. If only you'd lived with him for a fortnight, with his wife ill in the next room and the sink full of dirty washing. You don't know what sin is! How about the Archbishop of Rheims?

JOAN (*shaking her head*): His hair smelt of dandruff. He said I was in love with religion.

DUNOIS: I'll bet he says that to all the girls. Anything else?

JOAN: Well, there was always D'Aulon, my constant companion and brother-in-arms, but it was too casual to count for much. On the way here, for instance, he kept on at me to slip away from the line of march for the odd week-end at some wayside inn, but I couldn't face it. No clean sheets, no hot water, all those refugees . . .

On the river-bank the PRIEST, cunning with drink, is attempting to make the pennon fly against the wind by means of a powerful bellows.

DUNOIS (*shaking his head*): Oh, what pitiful sins. And you didn't even enjoy them.

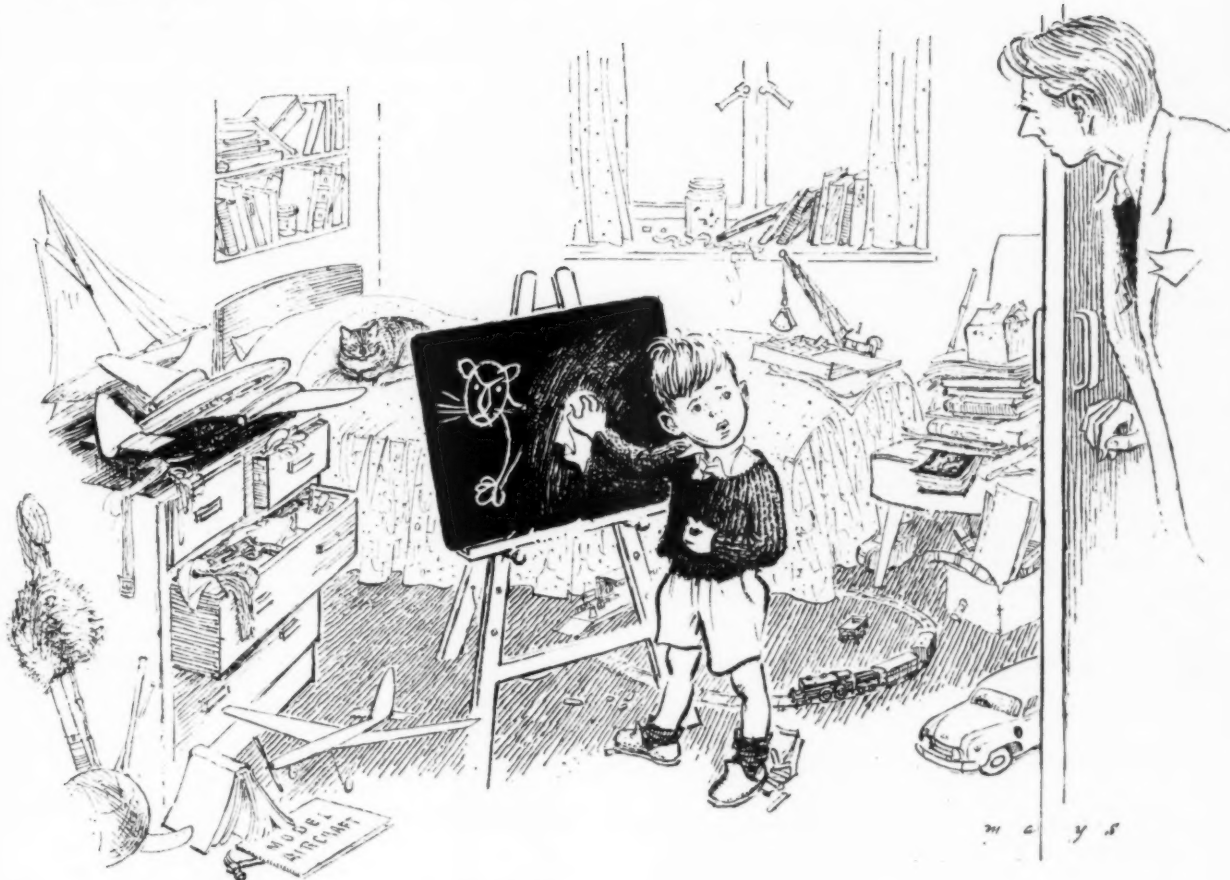
JOAN: Not one. And in the end, it isn't sufficient! (*Passionately*): Oh, how can I sin enough to be worthy of salvation? What hideous devilment can I get up to that will make my ultimate repentance notable enough to change a wind? (*Suddenly she stands up, stock-still, looking upwards. Bells are heard. As the sound dies away, her eyes are shining.*) Of course! Of course! Oh, what a fool I've been!

DUNOIS: What is it?

JOAN: I haven't yet tried a sin I can enjoy! (*Taking his hand*): Jack, lad, I've held thee at arm's length far too long. If this doesn't do the trick, nothing will!

DUNOIS (*fervently*): Oh, Maid, this is miracle enough for me! (*He hustles the PAGE out through the door and kicks it to.*)





"I'm trying to draw a tiger, but I can't get the fuselage right."

He turns to JOAN with outstretched arms.) Now . . . let the wind blow where it will, say I!

At the same moment, on the river bank, the PRIEST, on the point of giving up the bellows as a bad job, is suddenly amazed to notice that the pennon is now streaming in the opposite direction. He hiccups, crosses himself, and then lurches excitedly back to the hut.

PRIEST (*coming in just as DUNOIS takes JOAN in his arms*): A miracle! At last a miracle!

JOAN (*exasperated*): What? Already?

DUNOIS (*looking at the pennon*): God has spoken! And not a moment too soon! He's worked a miracle!

PRIEST (*smugly*): Well . . . somebody has.

PAGE (*at the door, slyly*): There's one thing certain: the wind is from the west.

DUNOIS: On! On to Orleans! (*He pushes JOAN away and rushes out to his horse.*)

JOAN (*following him, very thoughtfully*): Oh, Lord, why do you baffle me so?

PRIEST (*shaking his head paternally as he watches them ride away*): Children, children. Always looking for miracles—and never understanding how easy they are. (*But as he turns away he looks rather thoughtful himself. He goes into the hut, where the PAGE is already opening a bottle.*)

Patents Applied For

Copies of nearly 800,000 British patents, some dating back over 150 years, have been bought by Russia.

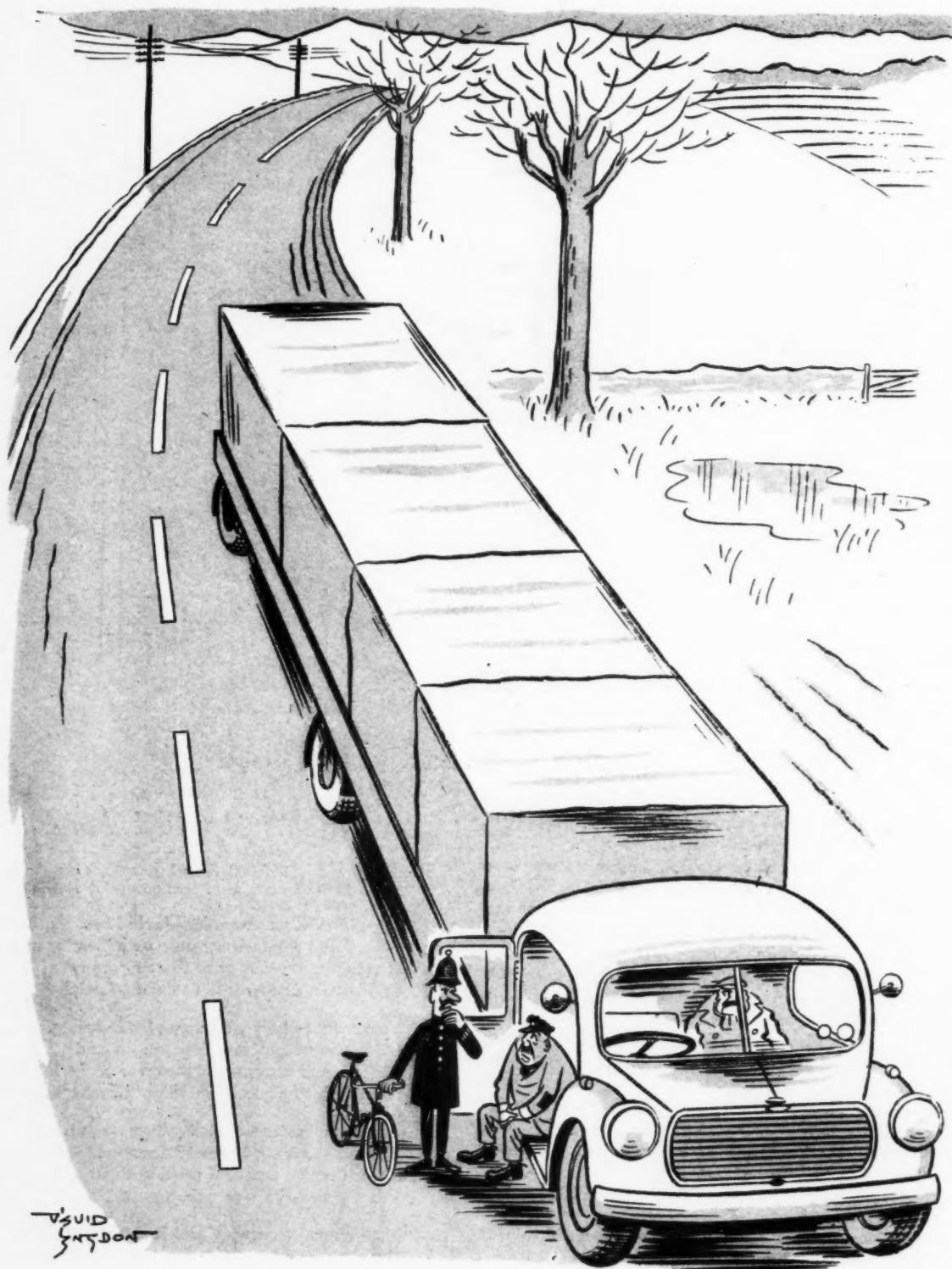
"O WHERE are you going?" said Reason to Russian,
"And what is your purpose in bearing away
Vast volumes of patents like sinister portents
Of Western democracy's doom and decay?"

Is your motive entirely a leaning for Learning,
Or do you behold, in a Betjeman-dream,
A magical aura surrounding the era
Of gaslight and gumption, sidewhiskers and steam?

Are you purchasing technical papers on purpose
To stow them away in an underground store
For fear that the Occident meets with an accident,
For fear that the West goes west in a war?"

"Of all human scourges," said Russian to Reason,
"Mistrust among nations is clearly the worst—
Our honest intention's to date your inventions
And prove to the world that we thought of them first."

E. V. MILNER



"Run out, eh? Tried the W.V.S.?"

Your Petrol and You : A Punch Inquiry

THE HEALTH ASPECT

ACCORDING to a B.M.A. spokesman it is a fallacy to suppose that the nation's health has benefited as a result of petrol rationing. For every person profiting from increased oxygen and exercise, another has suffered some physical setback directly or indirectly attributable to the restrictions. Reports are coming in of falls from horses and heart trouble caused by unaccustomed running and bicycling. The rush to the canals has brought many chills and feverish colds owing to the immersion of unskilled watermen. Overworked cobblers are a prey to nervous collapse. Apoplexy has afflicted a number of business men whose Supplementary applications were summarily rejected. Cuts and abrasions sustained in domestic arguments over the relative importance of train-catching and bridge-parties have been treated in large numbers, and most surgeries are now getting daily queues of men with facial blisters or "siphoner's lip."

Despite the reduction in traffic volume, motoring organizations do not foresee any substantial fall in accident figures. An expert estimates that of the cars remaining on the road, sixty per cent are out of strict control for seventy per cent of the time. This is due to the practice, rashly but widely recommended by motoring correspondents in the Press, of switching off the engine and coasting where possible. With indifferent brakes as the sole remaining control factor, drivers are at a serious disadvantage if their path is suddenly obstructed by cows, fallen trees or reversing coal lorries. Many miscalculate either the extent or the degree of the downward gradient, and, having come to a standstill before what seems to them the true foot of the hill, are tempted to coax another yard or two of free progress by jumping in the seat or wagging the front wheels. This too often leaves them stationary and broadside on to descending convoys of Army trucks, with undesirable results. The danger is greater at night, particularly with cars whose lighting circuit is governed by the ignition switch.

The consensus of medical opinion is,

however, that the adverse effects of rationing may in many cases not be apparent for some time. Anxiety neuroses among railway passengers, due to the idea that twenty per cent more trains are running on tracks already crowded, may be cumulative over a period of years; motoring may be back

Odd Spots

The following human stories are a random selection from thousands reported by our investigators.

● **ARTHUR TROUT**, Matlock, a sheepdog trainer, applied for 30 gals. to drive into Sheffield and go to the pictures: granted 60 gals. by return of post. ● **Nuneaton funeral-furnishers E.K. OGMORE & NEPHEW**, though proposing reversion to horse-drawn hearses, sought 10 gals. for van used to collect urgent timber supplies: rejected, with offer to reconsider during warmer weather. ● **DANIEL BALLCUP**, giving occupation as "Recluse," applied for 1 gal. to get by scooter to the shops (Frisby-on-the-Wreak, 18 m.): rejected, as not on list of registered recluses. ● **LADY BERYL BEAST-MARKET**, the Dower House, Wimbsbury, asked for 28 gals. to run 1922 Unic for charitable purposes (soup to cottagers): granted two gals. but coupons not enclosed. ● **LIONEL HONEYMILL**, Kendal, just launched one-man tractor-fuel delivery service to scattered Westmorland farmers, applied for 20 gals. monthly for tank of his tanker, supporting request with sworn affidavits from farmers, character testimonials from a Lord Lieutenant, a gynaecologist and a B.B.C. producer, and a strong recommendation from the Suffragan Bishop of Windermere; also claimed to have been at school with Sir Percy Mills: letter returned marked "Gone Away."

to normal, and rationing forgotten, before stockbrokers, seemingly without cause, start flying off the handle at London Bridge and beating ticket-collectors with their brief-cases. In the same way, many men who now affect to be taking hardship in their stride, and even bragging of firmer muscles and increased chest expansion, are extremely likely, if past the middle years, to be laying up trouble for the future by the abrupt change in the rhythm of existence. An article in the *Lancet*, by a specialist in nervous disorders, recently stated:

House-to-car-to-train-to-car-to-office is the pattern of life for great

numbers of middle-aged men. Substitute for this, with little or no preparation, the pattern, House-to-bicycle-to-bus-to-train-to-bus-to-walk-to-pub-to-office, and his daily life is out of phase, its metre rendered uneven, its cogs disengaged. If this man were to take a corpuscle count he would be horrified at the change.

The writer goes on to make the point that people who have for thirty years spent seven-eighths of their waking lives in a sitting position cannot suddenly straighten themselves out for long periods in taxi-queues without violent repercussions on the muscular system, and recommends that ex-motorists should, particularly at the week-end, spend as much time as possible sitting in the driving-seats of their immobilized cars. (The period can be gradually reduced at discretion.)

To end on a brighter note, however, it is encouraging to learn from a Home Office spokesman that in one direction the health of the nation has not suffered the damage originally feared. Despite the claim by many small business men that their lives are in ruins as a result of



"They've got everything. Cottage in the country, a boy at Eton, a small car . . ."

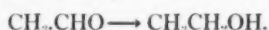
rationing, that starvation is just round the corner and their wives and families are destined for the poorhouse, no case of suicide on these grounds has been reported up to the time of going to Press.

SOME SUBSTITUTES

CONSIDERABLE publicity was given recently to a lady who, having run out of petrol, poured a bottle of whisky into her tank and drove home on that. General opinion is that she would have done better to walk home, refreshing herself from the bottle as necessary; but of course there may have been other circumstances not appearing in the report, such as children to be fetched from a party or a large potted india-rubber plant in the boot.

A more promising report concerned a man who had discovered how to make a cheap substitute for petrol on a

commercial scale. No details were given, but most rumours seemed to concentrate on the idea that this substitute was ethyl alcohol, which can be prepared in the classical manner from a pot-still, when it appears in the form of gin, whisky, vodka or some other form of refreshment, according to what raw material goes into the still; or, more austere, by the reduction of acetaldehyde, thus—



If this is indeed the formula employed by this public benefactor, his substitute will have the extra advantage that it will be palatable as well as propellant. The reducing agent generally used is an amalgam of sodium and mercury in water, if anyone is interested.

A slight disadvantage is that, by the time the duty on this delicious fluid has been paid and provision made for paying the fine that commonly results from operating an illicit still, the cost is

FACTS AND FIGURES

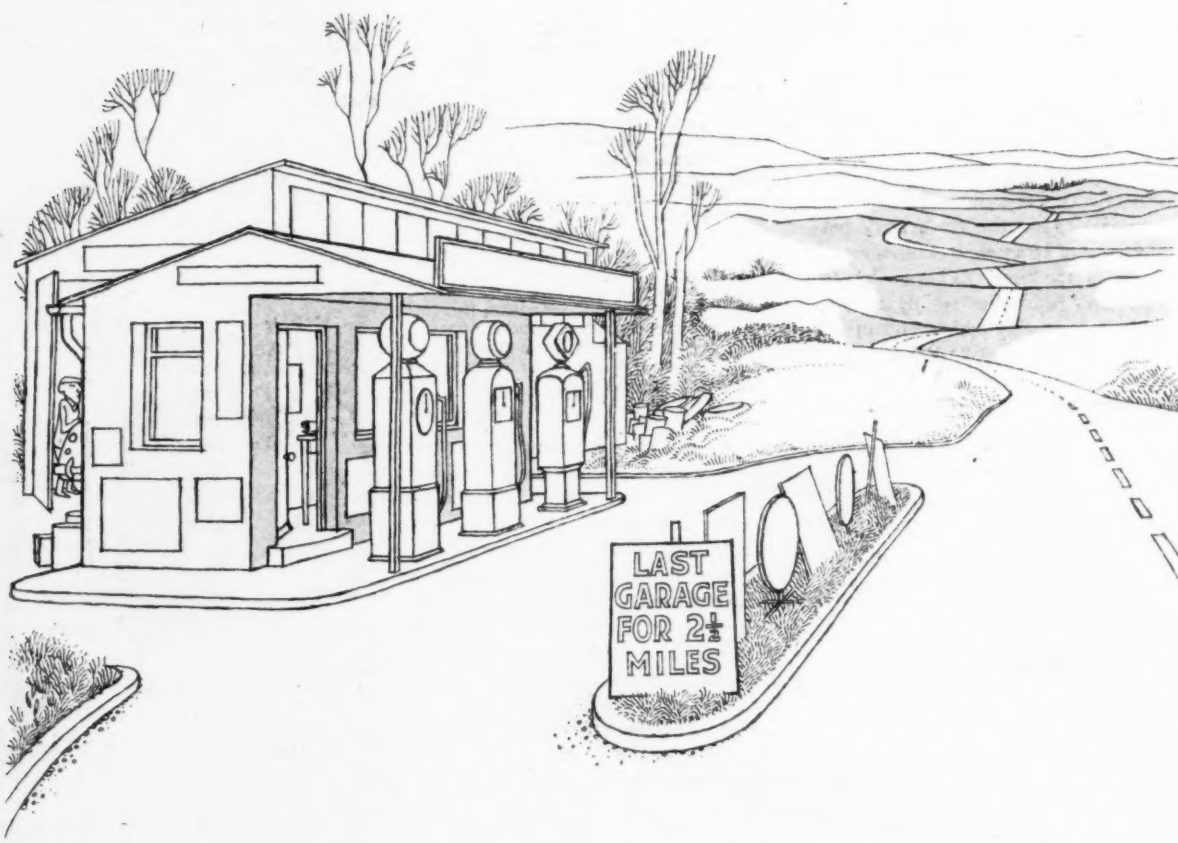
¶ In a poll of London motorists 20% said "Right," 8% said "Wrong" and 72% didn't know when shown the spelling of Carburettor.

¶ Dirt carried into a car on the driver's boots can increase petrol consumption by as much as one gallon in every 28,000,000 miles, or fifty-six return trips to the moon.

¶ If rationing ends in August the estimated drain on the nation's paper supplies will be as follows: Coupons and application forms, 800 tons; Lending articles, 7,500 tons; Resolutions by hauliers' associations, 170 tons; Scurrilous telegrams to Regional Fuel Offices, 25 tons.

¶ It has been calculated that since December 17th over 750,000 motorists have looked out their surplus coupons from the last rationing period and decided not to risk it.

¶ If British smokers gave up their lighters for one week the spirit saved would be enough to take Mr. Watkinson half-way across the Atlantic in a Vickers Viscount, or get Mr. Macmillan to Westminster by scooter every day for ten years, or make a fortune for anyone who knew where the stuff was cached. In a recent poll an overwhelming majority favoured the first course.



likely to be prohibitive, but no doubt ways round this will be found.

Motorists concerned with high performance may be interested to note that fuel of a higher octane number can be prepared by adding octane to fuel of a low octane number. Octane is a saturated fatty hydrocarbon having the formula C_8H_{18} , and your local hydrocarbon merchant will knock you up some for a few pence.

Another easily-obtained substitute for petrol is coal-gas. In times of absolute shortage motorists are inclined to attach vast gas-holders to the tops of their cars, but the basic ration to-day is not so small as to justify such an extreme measure. Useful containers can be extemporized from the large coloured balloons sold by men on the pavement in Leicester Square and Coventry Street. These should be provided with adequate ballast and securely lashed to the outside of the car for use when required. There is no risk of the car being lifted into the air, unless of course the occupants are careless with their cigarette ends.

Small charcoal-burners, mounted either in the boot or on a small trailer, were very popular in post-war Germany. These produce supplies of coal-gas, and also, presumably, supplies of charcoal, which are very useful for motorists whose digestion has been upset by constant worry over petrol supplies. This type of apparatus is not complicated to work, and does not need the intervention of the human kind of charcoal-burner whose daughter, in the literature of one's childhood, so often married a prince. The short supply of princes has resulted in charcoal-burning as a profession having virtually died out.

Besides the substitutes mentioned above, cars can also be got to run on lighter-fuel, after-shave lotion and Eau de Cologne, and no doubt there will always be motorists ready to try them out and write to the newspapers about them.

A FUEL OFFICE VISITED

"PLEASE do not give my name," said the Regional Fuel Officer, "or they'll be round my back door with cans." So I shall call him Mr. X. He is a plump, cheerful man and has taken rationing in his stride.

"The mistake the public make," he



told me, brushing some Supplementaries off his desk, "is to expect fair treatment out of the rationing system. There's got to be the what you might call element of chance. Take the staff problem. I only have three here—Miss Whiting, old Ted Fraser and a boy. It stands to sense with forty thousand applications a day you get errors."

"What sort of errors?"

"All sorts. Things get lost, torn up, pushed down behind filing cabinets. Only yesterday the cleaner switched the trays on Miss Whiting's table, and twelve thousand gallons got misrouted. It's just one of those things."

"But don't you get complaints?"

"Oh, yes. I had to make a rule—envelopes with anything but official forms in go straight in the salvage. There's not the time. It's bad enough going through the forms, without

a stack of 'Dear Sir, It occurs to me that you may have inadvertently made a slip in the matter of my application . . . You could go mad, I mean.'"

"Oh, quite. Tell me, Mr. X, is it a fact that every Regional Office has an overall coupon allocation which it is forbidden to exceed?"

"Very definitely. I bear that in mind, of course, and my staff have instructions not to grant more than sixty thousand gallons per diem. That should leave me well under my ceiling when the period ends."

"But supposing you get valid applications for more than sixty thousand?"

Mr. X laughed. "Not a question of supposing. Happens every day." He pressed a bell and a middle-aged woman slid a hatch and looked through. "Oh, Miss W, how many over the sixty to-day?" "Hang on," said the woman.

She disappeared for a moment. "About eight and a half sacks," she reported, coming back. "The boy's just took them down to the furnace."

"You see," explained Mr. X, "it's not a bit of use keeping them. Haven't the space. If a system's going to run smooth it's got to have elbow-room."

"But surely there must be cases where real hardship occurs?"

"Ah, well, now," said Mr. X, "I'll tell you. What I find—and, mind you, I've been employed in various restrictive capacities over a period of years—is it's no good getting emotional, you might say. Not in a national crisis. Hardship? Well, it's a relative term, ain't it? I don't mean if a paralytic actually called in person and made out a case I'd not listen. But after all there was men without legs before petrol was invented. They had to manage. Look at the Crimea."

"Of course. But—"

"Then again, I believe in applying a yardstick. Several. For instance, I can't stand people with names to their houses instead of numbers. With me, they're out."

"They get nothing?"

"Not a sausage. Same with them who put Army ranks in brackets. Also anybody writing in green ink."

"But isn't that a bit arbitrary?"

"I don't know nothing about that," said Mr. X with a shrug. "Point is, you've got to have elimination, see? You don't suppose we've time to read the forms? We start in the morning by granting all applications with their corners sticking out of the pile. Any to come, we grant the short addresses. It's what I said—what does the public expect?"

An old man came in with a toppling stack of envelopes.

"Arternoon delivery," he announced.

Mr. X kicked a large waste-paper basket over to him.

"In there, Ted," he said. "It's just on five. If you like to get your coat on I'll run you home."

THE NON-MOTORIST'S POSITION

INQUIRIES among members of the community who have not the incomparable felicity of possessing motor-cars reveal a situation that might be summed up by the word ambivalence if only the Oxford Dictionary would admit the existence of such a word. On the one hand, non-motorists being implacable enemies of all who own even the tiniest and oldest baby cars, they are delighted to see how much inconvenience the lack of petrol causes their

Where to Apply

Those still without basic or supplementary coupons, or wishing to discuss existing allocations, should write to the following (or similar) addresses:

The Regional Fuel Officer,
The Regional Fuel Office,
Ministry of Fuel and Power,
Hydrocarbon Oils Division,
Petroleum Section,
Rationing Department,
Desk 29,
Room 40c,
5th Floor,
4th Staircase,
3rd Corridor,
2nd Door on Right,
East Wing,
Ministry Buildings
(Fuel Block,
Petroleum Spirit Division),
11-23 Stigginswake Lane,
The Crescent,
FOOLS BOTTOM,
Nr. Dingwall,
Ross and Cromarty,
Scotland.

Applicants are advised to use block capitals and simple language.

hereditary foes; on the other hand, they resent the assumption in the press that what is hard luck on motorists is hard luck on the entire population, and resent even more the encroachment by motorists on their formerly exclusive preserves, such as buses, trains and zebra crossings.

"When there isn't enough room on the buses," said Mrs. Robinson, twenty-three, of St. Paul's Cray, "we don't go crowding into their motor-cars, so why should they come crowding into our buses? I mean it stands to reason, doesn't it?"

Another frequent cause of annoyance among non-motorists is the heavy incidence of jokes about coupons for lighter-fuel, several of which may well be found in the neighbouring pages of this issue. "Every time I take my lighter out to light a fag," said Mr. Patrick McEntee, thirty-two, an unemployed cork-shaper from Cork, "some fool asks me if I think my ration is going to last me out. I do not think it can be too widely known that lighter-fuel is not on the ration and that no coupons are required for it."

Similar arguments have been advanced in connection with fluids designed for removing-grease stains from clothes, even when they are clearly labelled "non-inflammable." The theory appears to be that non-inflammable



Eric Burdgin

"I'm being served, thank you."

cleaning preparations are simply a kind of Diesel equivalent of lighter-fuel.

Travellers on London buses, who find that their buses are running to schedule for the first time since the disappearance of the London General Omnibus Company, are hard put to it to find an excuse for ill-temper in this unaccustomed punctuality. However, since ill-temper is the only emotion ever regarded as worth showing by any British community, except in connection with the Royal Family, they have ingeniously back-dated their irritation and may be heard censuring motorists who used to park their cars in the streets before petrol-rationing but now do so no longer. "Why should they be allowed to hold us all up with their great big limousines?" asked Mr.

George Nutt, seventeen, a carpenter of Chelsea. When it was pointed out that "they" were not holding anyone up with their limousines, for the first time for a number of years, Mr. Nutt replied that they would be doing it again any moment, an opinion considerably more optimistic than any expressed so far by a Government spokesman.

WHAT THEY SAY

HOW has Britain's hour of crisis, and British cheerfulness in the face of adversity, impressed others? Our investigators invited comments from the following leaders of world opinion:

Dr. Azikiwe: Loose talk of a favoured position for M.P.s is grossly

unfair, and a reflection on the integrity of politicians everywhere.

Mr. Chou En-lai: Texas is not on my itinerary.

Mr. Samuel Beckett: My next play is set in a derelict petrol-station.

Mr. Robert Menzies: If Suez is sending us British immigrants I say to them: Welcome, there is plenty of petrol here.

Archbishop Makarios: There is no question of my visiting London for talks until the situation improves.

H.R.H. Princess Grace of Monaco: I think they are all very sensible to go in for these baby cars.

It was not possible for our Egyptian representative to see President Nasser, who was away on a motoring holiday, but an aide said that he was authorized to say that the President had no quarrel with the British motorist.



"He keeps asking for petrol."



HOW do the ski-ers come down at Zermatt
all season from Christmas to Spring ski-ing time,
and why should they wish without reason or rhyme
to expend their vacation in self-immolation
risking fractures and breaks at the drop of a hat?

For a few days to dwell in some six-star hotel
taking five o'clock tea
all dirndl and simper
dressed for *après le ski*
(shades of Tyndall and Whymper!).

Whence each morning arising
(qualms and terrors disguising)
they will queue before nine
at the Gornergrat line,
till they're borne to the peaks
in the train, as it creaks
o'er ravine and crevasse,
in a grease-coated mass—
sardined in the space in which they are pent
till they come to the place of Awful Descent . . .

Erupting! . . . The throng
comes plunging headlong,
down like Sennacherib
eager to crack a rib,
mad as the Gadarene
porkers—or madder e'en!—

Girls from the glossies
and Greek shipping bosses,
Field Marshals from N.A.T.O.
and Readers in Plato,
Gold Star and beginner
from Poona to Pinner,
Long Island and Thailand
(even Berne and Lucerne),
with snow-plough and stem-turn.

Tripping and hobbling,
Side-slipping and wobbling,
quaking and shaking,
a timid course taking
alone or in file
in Ski-School crocodile.

Or skidding and sliding
and swooping and gliding,
Schwung-ing and Christi-ing,
"Achtung!"-ing and "Grüssti!"-ing
and swerving and curving
with élan unnerving
around every twist
of the hard-trodden piste
and speeding, unheeding
the cries of the bleeding
who are floundering and foundering
and grumbling and fumbling and tumbling
and sprawling and brawling and bawling and calling
(a General Assembly united in falling).
A chain never ending, ascending, descending,
shouts and oaths of all Nations in harmony blending,
till the Alpenglüh fades from the far Gornergrat.
And *that's* how the ski-ers come down at Zermatt!

Southey on the Slopes



Bartlett

P. E. C.

Per Verba Ad Astra

By R. G. G. PRICE

TO-DAY the ladder to the big expense accounts is linguistic.

A man can live well by inventing a new vocabulary and calling it a Science, or a new syntax and calling it a Style. A comedian can become nationally known by a single catch-phrase. It therefore behoves any young man on the make to adopt an easily recognizable set of verbal peculiarities. There are other advantages. It is much simpler to move from the uneducated to the upholstered if you are not tethered to your origin by words. Hence the success of the Scots; nobody knows whether a Scots accent is illiterate or genteel or presentable. Verbal eccentricities are also usefully non-committal. Compare the apparent certainty of the curious dialect in which the Luce publications are written with the underlying caginess of their attitude. There are various new tricks that a smart operator might make pay.

1. The use of the interrogative-negative for positive. This gives a vaguely Celtic flavour, always an advantage outside Wales, Scotland and Ireland. It may sound like a *reductio ad absurdum* of Abbey Theatre dialect; but hasn't many a career been built on a *reductio ad absurdum*? After a couple of times, "Then didn't the Chancellor of the Exchequer reply that he had no further information and wasn't the Right Honourable Member for Huyton on his feet at once . . ." will have come to seem not only individual but inevitable.

2. The use of the Homeric or repeated epithet before names of towns: "The Right Honourable Member for sunny Eastbourne," "Smog-hidden Wolverhampton's goal-keeper," "The Archbishop of Kentish Canterbury," "All the winners for salt-giving Epsom."

3. The use of pet words, so that even an unsigned piece becomes obviously yours. The majority of these should not be *outré*, though at least one should be, and there should be one phrase, preferably a robust one. Dipping at random in *Roget*, I find "dowse," "wheedle," "punnet," "leery" and "pickthank," which apparently means one who curries favour. For the phrase I pulled out "I'll be hanged if . . ."

Your political gossip will look like this: "I'll be hanged if the pickthanks

of the Shadow Cabinet are going to succeed in wheedling leery Harold Wilson into filling their puny punnets for them. His speech on fiscal policy is likely to dowse many an avid gleam." When Parliament is not sitting you might get a chance to try: "For the two-thirty the leery punter will watch Mademoiselle d'Armentières. Opoponax has been over-rated and if his owner thinks he has it in the punnet his trainer has wheedled him into dowsing his judgment. I'll be hanged if Merrie Wales improves on her performance at Newmarket. PICKTHANK'S TIP: Maraschino II."

4. The use of specialized metaphors. As well as using the fullest range of peculiar comparisons, draw on one particular class so often that you become associated with it, e.g. Jewels. This means having to decide whether the winter sky is more like chalcedony than zircon; but there are not very many precious and semi-precious stones to learn up and you might get your models agreed as income-tax expenses. Political gossip in this style may strike you quite rightly as hard to follow; but the public does not want to read the classy bits in its paper carefully. It just likes to feel they are there. "If Mr. Lennox-Boyd is chrysopraxe, Mr. Turton is bloodstone. Last week neither appealed to the 1922 Committee, who seemed to prefer a pearl like Lord Salisbury or a cultured pearl like Lord Kilmuir. Mr. Selwyn Lloyd less sardonic than sardonix . . ."

It may seem a repetitive foundation for a literary career; but we are not talking about literary careers. We are talking about careers. The public can remember only a few facts about any individual. Bejewel your prose and you will soon have a niche as the man who bejewels his prose.

5. Although I favour the ornate, the extensive and the orotund as a probably imminent reaction from the clipped, the casual and the brash, I am not quite certain that the continuance in office of sub-editors trained in space-saving days may not delay the swing and I advise the simultaneous cultivation of a style of brisk obscurity. Remember that nobody has taught the public American slang. It has simply felt guilty when baffled by it. You can safely assume that

your readers will humbly pin a meaning of sorts on to any phrase you use. They will also prove co-operative when you invent proper nouns. This is the kind of thing that might well lead to champagne and week-end farms:

"Jay Griffiths may be dull as dish-water but he pulls the limelight while log-chipping Jay Grimond looks all three-pointed for the pallors of anonymity." "Pee Thorneycroft has lost ground in Peck's Close these five, six days. Some up and coming noted from Dee Sandys." Peck's Close, the reader feels, now that's the London end of O.E.E.C., or one of the quads of the Bank of England—or is it the home of some frightfully exclusive Tory dining-club? One sentence in ten should be incomprehensible throughout: "Short of Tuesday, Eff Soskice should be gimleting Aitch Brooke's Praed-street rootlings, or how come?"

6. And even the drabest sentence can have its impingement-rating raised by putting all the prepositions into italics.

2 2

"Actress Claire Bloom danced with the Philippines Ambassador, Mr. Leon Guerrero at a party in Kensington last night . . . The Ambassador's wife told friends that she enjoyed 'stay-at-home' week-ends . . . She said: 'I am not one of those who yearn to be at the seaside. In fact, I hate bathing in the sea . . . you never know what horrible crawling thing you will tread on next . . .'"

Evening Standard Night Reporting Corps

Representative from somebody's Underwater Reporting Corps, probably.



"Star, News, and Randolph!"

Unrecollected in Tranquillity

YOU will find, they told Henry, that the pace is pretty fast.

You won't have a moment to yourself. The noise is deafening. The dry Martinis are served in claret-glasses and made of straight gin with a squeeze of lemon-peel. I know, Henry said, but I'm sure it will be all right. I have a strong constitution. If you had a constitution as strong as that of the United States, they told him, sooner or later you would feel the strain. Everyone does when they go to New York for the first time. Try to get a few hours in bed at least one night a week, and get yourself some tranquillizer pills. What are they? Henry asked. They set you back on an even keel, it was explained, when you feel you can't go on any more. The doctor in your hotel will give you a prescription. Doctors in American hotels will give you a prescription for anything.

Henry drove in from the airport to his hotel and took a shower and sat in his air-conditioned room watching the

television. Every now and then he switched over to another channel. There seemed to be an endless number of them, and all exactly the same. After half an hour he dressed and went out to a business conference. It came to an end at midday and everyone went to a bar, where they were served with dry Martinis in claret-glasses. When luncheon was over, Henry went to another business conference. At half past five he was given a dry Martini in a claret-glass, and some time later he found himself with a charming girl watching *My Fair Lady* with complimentary tickets. Afterwards they went on somewhere for supper. Henry felt very braced when he returned to his hotel, but he remembered to ask the hall-porter about the tranquillizers. "Sure, Mac," said the porter, "I'll fix it for you."

In the morning he had a prescription, which cost him five dollars, and a bottle of red tablets called Pacifil, which cost him five dollars more and for which he

By B. A. YOUNG

felt no desire. He put them in the cupboard in his bathroom and went to inspect an aircraft factory. After dry Martinis and luncheon he went up the Empire State Building, attended a press conference, bought a record of *My Fair Lady*, consumed several dry Martinis and dinner, took in a movie, discussed television in a bar on East 55th Street, talked politics in a bar on 6th Avenue, took in a cabaret in Greenwich Village and swallowed a Hamburger and a pint of coffee on his way back to the hotel. He felt wonderful.

On the morning when he was due to fly home he attended a reception given for him by a firm with which he would have done business if the Treasury had allowed him any dollars. They gave him dry Martinis in balloon glasses. "How did you find New York?" asked one of the Vice-Presidents.

"New York is wonderful," Henry said.

"You didn't find the pace too fast?"

"The pace is exactly right."

"Did you manage to get enough sleep?"

"I've averaged four hours a night for nine nights and I never felt better."

"It wasn't too noisy for you?"

"The noise was just how I like it."

"Some people think we make our Martinis too strong."

"Yours are the only Martinis in the world which are precisely the right strength."

"If it will be any help to you," said the Vice-President, "I'll call for you later at your hotel and drive you out to the airport."

"I'll try to get my packing finished in time," Henry promised.

At luncheon Henry made a brilliantly witty speech and shook hands with a great number of people. For the first time, when he got back to his hotel he felt depressed. To begin with he did not want to leave New York, and moreover he hated packing. It was quite certain, he thought, sitting on the bed and staring moodily at the television, that there would not be room for all the little parcels he had bought, and also it was quite certain that he would leave his shaving-brush behind, and probably his bedroom slippers as well.

He threw everything he could see into his suitcase and went into the



"Non, madame—M.G.M. were not on hand to film the Royal birth."

bathroom to collect his toilet things. In the bathroom cupboard, still unopened, stood his bottle of Pacifil. Why, he thought, this is exactly what I need. One of these, if all they say is true, and I shall be able to view my packing troubles with a cool efficiency unequalled in my travelling experience.

Henry swallowed a Pacifil tablet and sat watching the television while he waited for it to take effect. In quite a short time he found himself cool, efficient and utterly untroubled by the problems that had been worrying him so much a moment before.

When the Vice-President arrived, Henry was waiting in the foyer, his bag, his overcoat and his hat beside him, a beatific smile on his face. "My dear fellow," he said to the Vice-President, "here I am, as you see, packed and ready."

"That's swell," said the Vice-President.

A bellhop approached Henry across the foyer. "Mr. Flanagan," he squawked, "you left your passport at the reception desk." Henry patted his shoulder and gave him a dollar. Out of the lift stepped a Hungarian chambermaid. "Mr. Flanagan," she said, "you are leavink all this English money and some keys." "Yes," said Henry, beaming. "Also," said the chambermaid, dealing the objects out one after another, "your shave-brush and your little slippers." "Yes, yes," said Henry. "Also—"

In the Vice-President's car he sat with his case on his knee, happily stowing away all the items he had forgotten. "I don't know why people make such a fuss about packing," he said. When he came to the bottle of Pacifil he decided not to put it in his suitcase but in his overcoat pocket. He might need it to help him surmount the next obstacle on his journey.

"Even the tropical island paradises of the South Pacific cannot escape from television. Guam now has its own television station, whose programmes will have to compete with the grandeur of Pacific sunsets and the beauty of palm-fringed beaches . . . Most of the 30,000 Guamanians do not seem to find the innovation incongruous. They have taken it in their stride—just as they did the Japanese occupation and baseball . . ."

Evening Standard

Perhaps it's just that their spirit's broken.



Thoughts and Billiards Balls

Mr. Bertrand Russell, O.M., once told us that there was no essential difference between a thought and a billiards ball. In a recent article he tells us that, with the disappearance of matter under the analysis of science, "things no longer exist. There are only events." Neither, he says, do persons exist, a discovery which puts an end to the "fairy tales" of religion.

NOW Bertie O.M. has informed us (ahem!) that he cannot distinguish at all Between Hamlet and ham and a pot full of jam, or a thought and a billiards ball.

All the things he called "thing" have at last taken wing, leaving only "events" in their place,

Such events as his trousers, the hat on his head and the curious nose on his face,

Tra-la,

The fabulous nose on his face.

Oh I used to believe I was certainly I, and you were undoubtedly you, But Bertie O.M. with his usual phlegm says this is naïve and untrue. He firmly insists that no person exists. We are merely events in a void, Like the bees that go buzzing about in a head, which I think might be better employed,

Tra-la,

I am sure might be better employed.

Though babes like Isaiah might talk in their sleep of a mystery deeper than death, In their fairy-tale fancies, quoth Bertie O.M., they were wasting their frivolous breath.

He has buried the body, the thinker and thought, and sealed up the grave with a stone

And the only event he has failed to destroy is the mug with a soul of his own,

Tra-la,

The mug with a soul of his own.

It's as old as you please. If Aristophanes could arise from the "twilight of time" With Bertie O.M. as the principal gem in the ring of his whimsical rhyme, What a chorus of clouds from the sky would descend to acclaim the event of an age! What a roar of delight from the gods would ascend when Bertie appeared on the stage,

Tra-la,

When Bertie appeared on the stage!

ALFRED NOYES



R. Aux. A. F.

WHEN we could serve by flying, we gave up our time and flew;
 But now, it appears, our country has nothing for us to do.
 No doubt the boffins have got it taped; but we'd like to make it clear—
 If they ever find anything else for us, they will always find us here.

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In the City



Optimism on the Dole

THE word unemployment is creeping back into the leader columns.

For many years we have had more work than workers, more jobs on offer than men and women ready to accept them, and the economic pundits have had to turn Keynes and Beveridge inside out to find ways and means of writing intelligibly about "overemployment," "redeployment" and "redundancy." Looking back on this past era of full employment nothing is much more remarkable than the manner in which economics has clung to its reputation as the "dismal science." In spite of prodigious industrial expansion, of increasing productivity, magnificent redevelopment of the export trade, improved capital investment, social revolution, establishment of the Welfare State, and overfull employment, our economists have continued, week in, week out, to make our flesh creep with tales of imminent disaster.

If the gold and dollar reserves reveal some slight shrinkage in our credit balance we are faced with bankruptcy. If attempts are made to peg inflation we are threatened by the ugly mug of disinflation. If wage-earners look reasonably happy we are warned that the middle classes are utterly despondent and hopelessly impoverished. If industry flirts with automation we are told that our effort is too little or too late. If Bank Rate is raised we are stifling initiative: if it is lowered we are garrotting the savings movement and wallowing in self-indulgence. And if Lord Woolton's "new Elizabethans" decide to try their luck overseas we are guilty—according to Graham Hutton—of banishing our bright young men from a disordered society.

It is tempting, no doubt, to greet the optimistic overtures of the new Prime Minister and Chancellor ("Britain is still *Great Britain*") with a burst of cynical laughter, but as a corrective to the woeful wailing of the dismal scientists even a yell of braggadocio is welcome.

There are now about three hundred thousand unemployed persons in Britain and the gap between vacancies and workless has been closed. A year ago, when the unemployment total stood at a hundred and sixty-five thousand, the

number of jobs waiting to be filled was nearly four hundred and fifty thousand. The change has been rapid; Mr. Macmillan's policy for disinflation has produced a first dividend of results. And the figures have yet to reveal the effects of the Suez adventure, the oil shortage and the subsequent heavy cuts in motor and ancillary industries.

Unhappily, the reduction in the number of jobs going begging seems to have made little difference to the mobility of labour. The tempting carrots of higher pay had failed to

attract more men to the manufacturing export industries, and it was hoped that the threatening stick of unemployment would do the trick. So far, however, the results have been very disappointing. Last year the number of people employed in manufactures fell by a tenth of a million, while service industries and trades which are not concerned with capital equipment or exports won more recruits. In other words, we moved a little closer during 1956 to the crazy, ruinous policy of taking in each other's washing.

The big question facing Great Britain in 1957 is whether essential movements of manpower from less important to key industries can be effected without the sanctions of stiff unemployment. There is no room among the first-class powers to-day for peoples who refuse to make maximum use of their resources.

MAMMON



In the Country



The Light of Asia

THE ground is too wet to plough. The men spend their time fencing or mucking out. Stables and calf houses are cleared of their tight warm carpet of dung. The deep litter in the poultry house is so compact, though only fowls have trodden it, that it can be cut with a hay knife: it alone yields a couple of trailer loads. After a few days of this quarrying, a mountain of manure stands in the middle of the stock yard to wait for the contractor to come along with his mechanical spreader. Staring at this steaming pile, I am reminded of a pamphlet I received six months ago from a School of Rural Economy in India. At the time I thought its contents too primitive to have either interest or appreciation for us in this country. Now I am not so sure. Judging by the speed with which this Scientific Age has carried us forward in the last six months it may soon bring us to a standstill. We're already dependent on candles for lighting, and our car is laid up in the garage . . . I think I'd better look this pamphlet out again.

The first few pages do not apply here. In these the writer urges the Indian villager to stop his habit of flinging cow packs on to the wall of his house to

dry there to be used for fuel. As he says, "it is a great waste to burn this precious manna." And surprisingly enough he doesn't urge the Indian farmer to plough the manure in; his purpose is to persuade them to conserve it for light and power. A table of statistics proves his point. Apparently the droppings from one cow can provide light, heat and power for two men if the basic product is used scientifically. All you have to do is to dig a hole in the ground. You do not jump in it. You fill the hole half with water, half with dung. Then you make the pit airtight and put a pipe into the top to collect the methane gas which quickly bubbles to the surface. If we take his word for it, one cow can thus light two rooms for a year, and provide sufficient calories to cook four hundred and thirty-eight loaves or propel an engine of 2 h.p. for over five hundred hours. If it can do that am I not right in assuming it could propel a 10 h.p. engine for a hundred hours? I have thirty cows . . . I look at my car in the garage again. And those who are interested may be relieved to know that they need not even dig a pit. An American manufacturer has already marketed a cheap methane plant especially designed for the coolies of Bengal and Bidford.

RONALD DUNCAN



THE oddity about the new Government is that Mr. Angus Maude is not in it. If the formula had been to exclude all members of either of the two pre-Christmas groups of abstainers, that would have made sense, but since the formula was rather to go out into the highways and byways and drag in anyone who would take a job on, Mr. Maude's exclusion is peculiar. For he after all was the only member of the Suez group who gave a reasoned defence of his action (whether you agree with his reasons or not) and there is a good deal of cause to think that most of the Conservative Constituency Associations—again rightly or wrongly—support the Suez group. Mr. Maude's fault perhaps was not that he gave bad reasons but that he gave reasons at all. For at Westminster, as in pre-war Japan, thought is dangerous. A party machine can forgive rebellion, but it cannot forgive reasoning.

Apart from that Mr. Macmillan's reconstruction does make sense. The notion clearly is to say of past policies "Let bygones be bygones," and to have as little foreign adventure and as much economic reconstruction as possible against the day when, having built up our economic policy, we can again afford a foreign policy. It is perhaps not a bad thing for the country or for the Conservative party if Mr. Henry Brooke is

in for a row about the Rent Bill. It takes the country's eyes off larger balls, and the great point about the Rent Bill is that it does not by comparison matter. If Mr. Brooke manages things skilfully, it will perhaps be possible for him to maintain his initial boast, "I know of no revolting Tory Members."

Mr. Duncan Sandys, the new Overlord to Dismantle our Defences, announces: "Our defence programme was suddenly expanded in 1950 and 1951 far beyond our capacity." I dare say that he is right, but it is only fair to remember that that was what Mr. Aneurin Bevan said at the time and was not so very popular with either Front Bench for saying it. It will be instructive to watch the Battle of Ebbw Vale being won on the playing-fields of Eton.

Nevertheless Mr. Macmillan's ambition is obviously a sensible one. Whether he will be able to succeed in this Voltairean policy of "cultivating his own garden" depends largely on events—that is to say, on foreigners. Will they let him get away with it? And Question Time is already showing the anxious curiosity of Members about the two real questions of the day, posed as they are in less elegant and less forthright language, "What makes Zik tick?" and "What makes Khrush blush?"

The plan had been to start off with as boring a week as could be managed. It was the preliminary handshaking of the boxers before the biffing commences. The Earl was still deer-stalking with his motor-car in America. The Tories gave Mr. Macmillan a moderate sort of cheer,

and the good-humoured Socialist comeback is for the moment to applaud all Conservatives who have been, or are thought to have been, at odds with the Government in the past. Mr. Butler got a little round on Tuesday, Sir Edward Boyle on Thursday, and there was jolly laughter for each Minister who answered questions for some other Minister. It is by now generally agreed that Sir Edward Boyle is just like Billy Bunter. What is not so widely noticed is that his chief, Lord Hailsham, is very like Billy Bunter too, and it was Bunter major who looked down from the gallery on Bunter minor as he made his debut on Thursday. He did all right but had to agree with Mr. Mikardo that he, too, failed in the eleven-plus examination. "Bunter minor (failed eleven-plus)."

The plan was, as I say, for a dull week with nothing more exciting than murder to talk about. The Homicide Bill, like a Swinburnean river, wound its weary way, and Members on Mr. Butler's advice decided that poisoners should not be hanged. Sir Lionel Heald is not an especially lively speaker, but he made quite a strong case for it that if other sorts of murderers are to be hanged, there is no great reason why poisoners should not be hanged too. But then there are not very many people who think that the present bill is drawn on any very cogent lines of principle. It is a political compromise between a House of Commons that is abolitionist and a House of Lords and a Government that are anti-abolitionist.

But all the interest of the week has been impromptu and non-party. No sooner were questions over on Tuesday than up jumped Colonel Wigg, that hero of a hundred fights. Colonel Wigg suffers from the great advantage that three-quarters of his observations are entirely inaudible, but his point seemed to be that Mrs. Mary Stocks on "Any Questions" had made some cracks about M.P.s' petrol rations. Mr. Langdon and Mr. Ledger mournfully added that, what was more, a chap in Romford had also made a joke as well. Was not this all a *prima facie* case of breach of privilege?

But—fancy, to their surprise—the protesting trinity discovered that there were some Members of Parliament who had not entirely lost their sense of humour, and Mr. Godfrey Nicholson and Mr. Du Cann from the one side, and



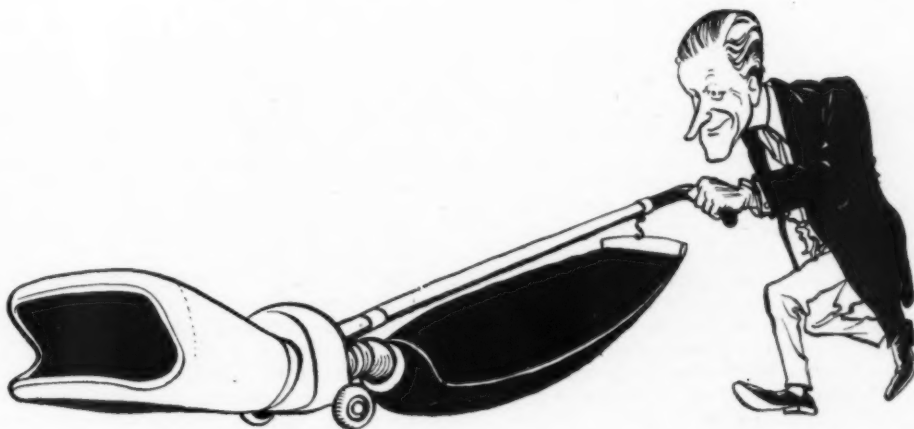
Mr. Desmond Donnelly and Mr. Osborne from the other, appealed to the house not to make itself ridiculous. Mr. Silverman, that stern traditionalist, was shocked at the notion that the House should do anything less absurd than it had been accustomed to do in the past, but the Speaker laboured manfully to teach Members that there were two different questions—whether the rules had been broken and whether it was wise to take cognizance of their breach. Some followed what he was saying and some did not. The truth is that the rules of privilege were drawn up in an age when Members of Parliament had an entirely different position in the State from that of to-day. Any act that interferes with the freedom of a Member to perform his functions is a breach of privilege. Precedent could be cited to show that almost every normal action of Parliamentary life is a breach of privilege. It is undoubtedly a breach of privilege for a Whip to seek to constrain a Member's vote, or for a constituent to write to him to ask him to take some particular action in the House. It is, as the Speaker himself pointed out, a breach of privilege to report the proceedings of the House in the press. The question is which of its undoubted privileges it would be prudent for the House to claim, for—let us face it—M.P.s are funny, and no conceivable Rules of Order can make them un-funny.

Anyway, the effect of it all was exactly the opposite of what Colonel Wigg must

have wished. It all played into Mr. Junor's hand. When the next day the question of summoning Mr. Junor to the Bar was raised there were a number of Members—Mr. Crossman, Sir Beverley Baxter and others—who were against having him there at all. Sir Beverley Baxter described the proceeding as "a mediæval pantomime," and the privilege-boys, led by Mr. Ellis Smith, asked the Speaker to demand a withdrawal. Sir Beverley withdrew

"pantomime" and substituted the word "drama." When Mr. Junor did appear on Thursday he certainly stole the show, and the instinct of the House was to get the business done with as quickly as possible before such impressiveness as it had evaporated. It will be interesting to see whether Colonel Wigg has killed such cases. Dignity is like a top-hat. It is rapidly destroyed if you are always standing on it.

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS





BOOKING OFFICE

Prophet with Honour

The Life of Hilaire Belloc. Robert Speaight. *Hollis and Carter, 30/-*

IT is difficult to imagine a more hazardous and arduous task than undertaking at this time a biography of Hilaire Belloc. The legend of the man, which so flourished during his lifetime, has grown faint and listless since his death. Nor, with one or two exceptions, do his published works serve to sustain it. The fact is that they are, for the most part, somehow unsatisfactory and are unlikely, now or hereafter, to find many readers.

In the light of these circumstances Mr. Robert Speaight's achievement in producing a biography which is interesting, understanding and sympathetic without being adulatory is the more creditable. He makes one see that Belloc, despite much in his character and activities which now appears tiresome, had in him elements of authentic greatness. He was, as Monsignor Knox said in his address at the Requiem Mass for Belloc in Westminster Cathedral in August 1953, in the true sense of the word a prophet. The mere achievement of coining the phrase "the Servile State," and envisaging its horrors as we know them to-day, as long ago as 1911, entitles him to the appellation.

Unfortunately for him he was a prophet with honour in his own country—or at least in the country of his adoption. For English Roman Catholics, particularly converts, he provided a robust and favourable wind which enabled them to sail along happily in the alien waters of Protestantism. Small wonder, then, that he basked in their admiration, stayed in their houses, became their mouthpiece and their justification. William Morris performed the same sort of function for the early Leftists, and to this day is used in old-fashioned publications like the *Daily Worker* to make the Marxist desert seem to bloom like an English rose.

There was, of course, as Mr. Speaight so admirably shows, much more to Belloc than that. He was a poet and a satirist of great distinction; if most of his prose works were carelessly and hurriedly produced, it was because he was under the inexorable necessity of laying hands on ready money. Like so

many talented writers of our time, he could never afford a long-term project, and had to produce an unremitting flow of words for the sake of his bank manager.

In politics he combined extreme radicalism with certain violent prejudices like anti-semitism and a legitimate contempt for representative institutions based on universal suffrage—a state of



mind out of which Fascism and Nazism were born. He admired the French Revolution and hated its consequences; he believed that European civilization and the Roman Catholic Church were identical, but despaired of the one and often found occasion to deplore the other. I liked very much his remark, quoted by Mr. Speaight, to the effect that the Church must be divinely blessed because otherwise the ludicrous and unseemly manner in which it had been conducted would have brought it to an end long ago.

Perhaps Belloc would have been more serene, or at any rate less at odds with his environment, if circumstances had permitted his mother to opt for France instead of for this country. One sees him as a member of the *Action Française* group, with like-minded associates and

some sort of roots in the society to which he belonged. Here, despite his fame and following, he was oddly isolated. Even ostensible allies like G. K. Chesterton were alien to the tradition he sedulously fostered. They assented to his propositions without sharing his state of mind. As for his time in Parliament, and the innumerable lectures he delivered and political articles he wrote, it may be doubted whether he ever succeeded in putting his ideas across. It is simply no good telling the English that they ought to be peasant-proprietors, or that Christendom is their heritage; they know they are not peasant-proprietors, and cannot help feeling that the Crusades happened long ago and were probably ill-advised. Incidentally, it is impossible not to smile wryly over poor Belloc's loss of such money as he had managed to accumulate by investing it in French Government bonds on the ground that a predominantly peasant country would never allow its money to become devalued. By the same token, the picture of him at French headquarters in 1940 is infinitely pitiable. Truly God is not mocked.

In the end Mr. Speaight makes one feel that Belloc's life was a rather melancholy one despite the insistent high spirits, snatches of song, and uproarious gatherings with kindred, or at any rate accommodating, spirits. Johnson has been criticized for getting angry with a lady who announced that she was happy. The offence was the greater in his eyes because she had neither beauty nor wealth nor wit to support her preposterous claim. What Johnson was getting at, doubtless, was that only the unhappy claim happiness as only the sick claim health. The truly happy and the truly healthy take their happiness and their health for granted. Where high spirits were concerned, Belloc, it must be admitted, was inclined to protest too much.

I was taken to see him near the end of his days when his faculties had greatly deteriorated. He complained then, across sixty years, that he had been deprived of a Fellowship at Oxford because he had taken the "wrong side" (that is, the anti-Dreyfus side) in the Dreyfus case. It seemed appalling to nourish a grievance so long and so ardently; that the grievance should

remain in a once well-stocked and agile mind which had otherwise become almost vacant. All the same, I remember him vividly—bearded, large and untidy. He gave, even then, a sense of being remarkable. I am grateful to Mr. Speaight for explaining to me with sense and moderation why I should have felt this. His biography is more than just a Life of Belloc. It is an important piece of social history, conscientiously, generously and skilfully done, and deserves to be read by all who care to understand these strange, turbulent times.

MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE

The Great World and Timothy Colt.

Louis Auchincloss. *Gollancz*, 15/-

Mr. Auchincloss's considerable gifts have been compared by many critics to those of Henry James, Edith Wharton and Somerset Maugham: like the latter, whom he most resembles, his happiest medium is the long-short-story or character-study of ten to fifteen thousand words, narrated by a shrewd observer of the human condition who is not himself deeply involved in the events described. His new novel suffers from the peculiarly American premise that an idealist is necessarily an ass, and the "hick" a hero automatically disrupted by contact with sophisticated or worldly values. Impatience with the young up-and-coming lawyer is unavoidable as he alternates between his ever-loving wife and a generous-natured Park Avenue girl who "dressed well, talked well, rode expertly and developed a real card sense": sympathy impossible when, by quixotic testimony in court, he brings unhappiness upon all concerned. On the other hand, those passages concerning David, the homosexual interior-decorator ("a ballet-dancer arriving on stage with a bound") exemplify the author's talent for portraiture at its best.

J. M.-R.

Gertrude Stein. Elizabeth Sprigge. *Hamish Hamilton*, 25/-

Miss Sprigge is more persuasive as a biographer than as a critic. She is excited by the early days of Modernism and by the Steins' Parisian circle and she is very good on the development of Gertrude Stein's personality. As far as idolatry goes she stands this side of Miss Toklas and she does not gloss over the criticisms of Hemingway and Matisse and the other ex-friends.

Miss Sprigge makes a good case for the psychological novels and tales; but on the later work she is unconvincing, partly because short quotations cannot illustrate "fugal" writing. Gertrude Stein thought a good deal about language but she was a better psychologist and social observer than linguist. Too often the experimental sentence was a sentence that did not communicate. Miss Sprigge points out that where Joyce was interested in words, Gertrude Stein was interested in syntax and cadence; but where Joyce can excite even when

unintelligible, too often Gertrude Stein simply irritates. However, she was a striking character and she comes to life in this very enjoyable biography.

R. G. G. P.

A Dread of Burning. Rosemary Timperley. *James Barrie*, 12/6

A Dread of Burning is short, but handled with an economy that gives the impression of a fuller novel. Its skilful turning of the screw on what begins as a conventional school story shows a dramatic sense that might well find a good play in the inner stresses of common-room life. Written in the first person by a mistress given special charge of a clever new girl who has lost her nerve, it describes sensitively the stages by which the child's confidence is won back, and at the same time gradually uncovers the criminal background responsible for her condition.

School society seems to have no secrets from Miss Timperley. The boredom and the enthusiasm are authentically blended; the mistresses, in ironic contrast, all live. She is a cool and accurate observer of character; nothing here is better than her brief sketch of a hospital sister, which brings an overpowering whiff of antiseptics and authority.

E. O. D. K.

Letters of Edward Elgar and Other Writings. Edited by Percy M. Young. *Bles*, 42/-

A selection of some three hundred letters from over two thousand might be an arbitrary and misleading business; this is not, because Dr. Young has the advantage of having made the detailed research into Elgar's life, music and beliefs necessary to his recent admirable biography of the composer.

Here is a profusion of pungent comment on the manners and ways of other generations—"Clara Butt dressed like a Mermaid to sing the sea songs at Norwich" (this at an ordinary concert performance in 1899)—side by side with Elgar's personal hopes and fears. In spite of natural optimism—"it's all very odd and nice, and mad, and hopeful as artistic things should be"—the main impression is of the continued integrity of the artist in expressing his wide experience of human affairs, while the man is assailed by growing disillusionment: thus to Frank Schuster, "... trying to write music, but the bitterness is that it pays not at all and I must write and arrange what my soul loathes to permit me to write what you like and I like."

J. D.

Lord Dickinson of Painswick. Hope Costley White. *Printed by John Bellows Ltd.*, 11/6

This slight volume, memoir and diary extracts, published privately, presents a politician who duplicated in civil life the kind of cleric too religious ever to be made a bishop. Born under the curse of private means it was only through



"The Riviera's all right, but for a really exciting holiday..."

perpetual self-scrutiny he could satisfy himself that tireless unpaid service on every well-meaning committee or public body of his generation justified him in enjoying a happy family life in comfortable conditions.

Member of the first London County Council and later its chairman, in Parliament he had to watch lesser men going over his head, and his best work was done in connection with the developing World Council of Churches and the League of Nations. From first to last through innumerable honest discourses he was haunted by a suspicion that he was a dull and prosy speaker. This volume offers nothing to suggest that he was mistaken.

C. C. P.

AT THE PLAY

The Two Gentlemen of Verona (OLD VIC) *No Laughing Matter* (THE ARTS)

SO long as he fails to bark, or worry the tragedian's trousers, or disgrace his profession in simpler ways, your stage dog is on velvet with the public. But Duff, the golden Labrador entrusted with the responsible part of Crab in the Old Vic's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, is quite different. In his early days one imagines he must have won the Golden Bone at RADA. Clearly he has hung on every word from his producer, Michael Langham, and then worked out for himself a cunning line of business with his master, Robert Helpmann's antic Launce. Again and again he gets an honest laugh, the biggest when he punctuates the long recital of his crimes with a yawn which none of our theatrical dames could have timed more beautifully.

This is a pleasing production of a play in which Shakespeare was trying out gambits which one continually

recognises from their later blossoming. Tanya Moiseiwitch has staged it delightfully, with a pillared garden set that changes geography easily, and given the cast the enviable clothes, smelling faintly of the stables, of 1830. Smoking a cigar and wearing the full dress of the Horse-Marines, the Duke seems always on the edge of sending a gunboat to subdue rebellious tribesmen. In an unexpected way the romantic effect is enhanced, not damaged, by this levity; it gives the impression of musical comedy without music, and so helps us to forget the absurdity of the plot. Nothing, of course, can finally disguise the forbearance, amounting to lunacy, with which Proteus is forgiven, but the confidence of the players survives the inevitable laughter.

This airy note of light and gay romance Mr. Langham reinforces with feeling of lovers genuinely in love. It is not his fault if they are pathologically susceptible. Keith Michell does everything for Proteus which a fine presence, a good voice and nice party manners can do; and does more, for there are moments when this tremendous cad appears almost astonished at his own behaviour. Richard Gale is a spiritedly simple Valentine, and Barbara Jefford as Julia pursues without indignity. I liked particularly Mr. Helpmann's Launce, a comic servant much funnier than usual, and funny with pathos.

All the same, the Vic is part of our national theatre, and it really must learn to speak. Among middle members of the

company there is still a dreadful tendency to gabble, especially when starting on a long slab.

No Laughing Matter is the English translation, by Lucienne Hill, of Armand Salacrou's *Histoire de Rire*, a play whose successful revival has just ended in Paris, where I saw and reviewed it the autumn before last. Small wonder the Parisians jumped at it; they are even sicker than we are of triangle drama, and took a personal pleasure, which I hope we may soon be offered in a public theatre, in seeing the components of smart adultery taken to pieces and dipped in acid. M. Salacrou is a moralist as well as a wit, who says, in effect, that if you have no faith and no loyalty, and think it clever to burn away your roots, then you must expect to be hurt. He has little sympathy with his characters, who muddle through a sort of high comedy of elegant low life. In his first act he is content to lead us up the garden, with a dazzling mastery of situation, towards the well-trodden, wide open spaces of Coward and Roussin; the heroine, secretly about to leave her husband, manoeuvres him into a hot defence of the right of any wife to go to her lover.

But this is not, after all, *Private Lives*. As we watch two flights from marriage rapidly disintegrate, and listen to the two abandoned husbands, one an egotist furiously miserable, the other older and wiser, with enough philosophy and cynicism to wait confidently, we begin to

see what M. Salacrou is up to. We have been laughing so much that it is a shock to discover how almost unconsciously we have swallowed a pretty hard-hitting sermon against society.

The play has travelled well in this translation. It is not ideally cast. Brenda Bruce, for instance, is too intelligent, too little volatile, for the heroine; but though some of the sparkle of the French revival is excusably missing, Peter Wood's production gives a very fair idea of a piece which I commend to those who can take switches of emphasis a good deal faster than we are often asked to over here.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Don't forget *The Waltz of the Toreadors* (Criterion—14/3/56), *Anouilh* at his best. *The Touch of Fear* (Aldwych—12/12/56) is intelligent crime, and *At the Drop of a Hat* (Fortune—16/1/57) original two-man revue of refreshing quality.

ERIC KEOWN



AT THE BALLET

The Polish State Dance Company
"Mazowsze" (STOLL)

IN a box close to the prompt corner of the stage at the Stoll Theatre a woman in black, seated alone, was unobtrusively in command of the exhilarating performance given by the Polish State Dance Company on its first visit to London. Not until she lightly leapt from box to stage at curtain fall could one feel sure that she was the Mira Ziminska-Sygietynski whose name as artistic director of the Mazowsze stands first among those of many collaborators set out in the programme.

The company gets its name from that of Mazovia, a district in the great Polish plain which is the home of the *mazurka*. It was here, according to a programme note, that Tadeusz Sygietynski, the company's composer, gathered from among thousands of aspirants the boys and girls who have been moulded into the present wonderfully homogeneous company of a hundred singers and dancers.

Mazowsze's aim is to recreate the traditional songs and dances of Poland and to make them theatrically effective. The villages have yielded talent—to say nothing of brilliant dresses—which captivated the London audience from the moment the curtain rose to disclose the company, raised tier upon tier, in rainbow array and invested with a charming air of demure diffidence, thus justifying Ovid's *si latet ars, prodest*.

Under the magnetic eye of Mme. Ziminska-Sygietynski the company combined seeming spontaneity with stunning virtuosity as they carried peasant dance into the realm of choreography. We have seen recently, notably in Russian troupes, displays of astonishing discipline and faultless drill in the dance, but not before



Proteus—KEITH MICHELL

(The Two Gentlemen of Verona)
Launce—ROBERT HELPMANN
Crab—"DUFF"

have these factors been combined with the appearance of uninhibited freedom.

Rustic coquetry and gallantry are the staple ingredients of both song and dance and the youngsters composing the company create the illusion of enjoying themselves enormously.

Traditional dancing seldom encourages soloists, and so, for the most part, individual talent among the visiting Poles tends to be inconspicuous. The immense verve which animates some of the pleasure transported from the village greens makes jive seem insipid by comparison.

Regional songs in simple moods of courtship, lament and reverie, into which an occasional verse in English doggerel translation is spatchcocked, to the great assistance of the mounting goodwill with which the whole occasion is suffused, complete the evening's unflagging zest.

C. B. MORTLOCK

AT THE PICTURES

The King and Four Queens
The Power and the Prize

THE very title of *The King and Four Queens* (Director: Raoul Walsh) announces that the film is not meant to be taken as anything but a playful piece of foolery. The attitude, the point of view, implied by that title is not that of the story-teller, the film-maker himself: it is at one remove, that of—no, not the critic but the publicity man in the front office. He is proclaiming with a roguish twinkle that in this film you can see "the king" of Hollywood, Clark Gable, and four lovely girls, taking part in a charade. (For all I know, the original story on which the thing is based may have been called that—but the film itself doesn't explain the connection, and so the mere use of the title justifies this explanation of it.)

It is a Western charade, in Cinema-Scope and De Luxe colour (photography: Lucien Ballard), and visually often very pleasing indeed. Mr. Gable appears as what the synopsis calls a "fascinating scoundrel" on the run from the law; he hears about the ruined town of Wagon Mound, which is populated exclusively by the four young widows (but one, they don't know which, may still be a wife) of the McDade brothers, and their formidable mother-in-law. This intimidating woman (Jo Van Fleet) is waiting for her one surviving son to come back for the stolen gold the outlaw brothers hid in Wagon Mound, and the fascinating scoundrel goes to see whether he can't find it himself.

She shoots him on sight, but only (of course) in the shoulder. This means that he is put to bed in the McDade home-stead and stays there during convalescence, while the girls, long starved of male company, do all they can to attract him. The end finds him with at least some of the gold and with the girl



Dan Keho—CLARK GABLE

The King and Four Queens

(Eleanor Parker) whose unscrupulousness matches his own—it is conveniently established that she quite certainly has no husband for the censor to worry about.

It is all quite trivial, conscienceless stuff, put together for mere entertainment, and on that level it succeeds. The dialogue style is often almost theatrical: a succession of emphatic, isolated speeches, with pauses between for laughs. Only Miss Van Fleet introduces a note of contrast and something like genuine emotion. One feels that here is a woman who really has lost four sons, and one regrets that she should be quite disregarded at the end.

The Power and the Prize (Director: Henry Koster) is set in the world of *Executive Suite* and *Patterns of Power*, but it is not as good. It is "hoked up" with an extra dose of emotion, and the happy ending for the two central characters smells of contrivance. Nevertheless (and in spite of certain passages that are unintentionally amusing) it does have quite a number of good points.

The hero (Robert Taylor) is a business man, an important figure in the offices of Amalgamated World Metals in New York, who goes to London to clinch negotiations with a British firm. It is in these English scenes that most of the unintentionally comic points arise: the curious fact is that the phenomena of one country reproduced for spectators in another—the same thing happens, goodness knows, in our own films' attempts to present the U.S. scene—are almost inevitably comic.

The hero, whose name is Cliff, cannot

bring himself to go through with the deal, because it depends on keeping quiet about certain facts that the English negotiators really ought to know; and apart from that, in London he meets and falls in love with a beautiful refugee (Elizabeth Mueller) who is politically and morally suspect. She goes to the U.S. to marry him just as the ruthless big boss (Burl Ives—a very interesting new departure for the genial singer) is demanding his resignation.

All is put right by another important member of the firm (Charles Coburn), whose influence makes it possible for Cliff to stay while the big boss himself resigns; this is the implausible part of the story. But as a whole the picture is oddly interesting. The dialogue is sometimes pretentiously literary, but most of it is unusually worth listening to.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

A promising new one in London is *The Man in the Sky*; more of this next week. Otherwise the most interesting programmes are as before: *Gerçaise* (19/12/56), *Baby Doll* (9/1/57), *The Silent World* and *A Girl in Black* (12/12/56), the two very long ones *War and Peace* (28/11/56) and *Giant* (16/1/57) and the Academy's pair of revivals, the 1935 Hungarian *Hortobagy* and René Clair's *Summer Manœuvres*.

Top new release: *Moby Dick* (21/11/56). Another good one in its much slighter way is *The Spanish Gardener* (9/1/57). Also in the list is *The Power and the Prize* (see above).

RICHARD MALLETT



ON THE AIR

The Twiddlers

MY television set does not encourage channel-switching. The gear lever is situated at the back of the box and can be manipulated only by a very long arm, and the disparity in visual pressure exerted by the two services is such that a change of allegiance calls for skilful retuning. It follows, perhaps, that I am inclined to apply the old British virtue of muddling through to my viewing. I switch on, hope for the best, and then try to make the best of a bad job.

Sometimes I feel momentarily ashamed of my inertia, my unwillingness to indulge in comparison shopping, but long experience has taught me that twiddling is an unrewarding occupation. If one cannot—for business reasons—switch off, one might as well remain in the frying-pan.

The other night, for a change, I twiddled energetically and fruitlessly between "The Ted Ray Show" (B.B.C.) and a "Val Parnell Spectacular" (I.T.A.). On one channel I saw Jill Day crooning beatifically knee-deep among the alien pops: on the other I saw Shani Wallis in a similar pictorial version of "Housewives' Choice." On one channel there was a sketch about a man trying to hold up a bank with a gun and an American accent (a wind-and-water adaptation of Stephen Leacock's brilliant piece "My Financial Career"); and on the other side of the fence there was a sketch about a man trying to withdraw money from a post-office (a somewhat funnier attempt to rewrite "My Financial Career"). I switched back to Channel 1 to find the



JILL DAY

TED RAY

KENNETH CONNOR

[The Ted Ray Show]

ubiquitous TV conjurer in command, yawned heavily, and reverted to Channel 9 for a séance with yet another genial exponent of legerdemain. It was difficult to decide which of the two galaxies of girls to escort. Both were suitably pneumatic and pretty, both danced in a leaden galumphing style suggestive of slipped discs and wayward knee cartilages. The only noteworthy difference between the two programmes was that the I.T.A.'s was performed against a reasonably rhythmic sound-track, whereas the Eric Robinson orchestra seemed overworked and depressed.

Ted Ray was disappointing. On steam radio he is one of our most reliable comics, the true heir of the great Tommy Handley. His method is sound—a quick-fire patter that converts grins into chuckles before the face has had time to subside, and chuckles into laughs when a delicate but sustained tattoo on

the ribs at last produces an explosion. On TV Ted Ray's stature seems to diminish alarmingly. His rich, thrusting voice becomes ordinary, and his face, which in our mind's eye was wonderfully mobile and grotesquely expressive, becomes no more amusing than the tax collector's.

It is not my intention to brand Ray as a TV failure—merely to point out that he is infinitely more funny on sound radio. Only the true clown can convert an indifferent script into a screen riot, and true clowns are very scarce. Arthur Askey certainly, possibly Max Wall, would have juggled the rather wearisome lines of Sid Colin, Talbot Rothwell and George Wadmore into an hour of acceptable hilarity. But other names escape me.

It is only fair to add that the versatile Kenneth Connor, an admirable character actor, was also flattened by the material available.

Like all imported film series the B.B.C.'s "Hey Jeannie!" is reasonably entertaining in small doses taken at intervals longer than those prescribed. The Carson girl is as fresh as a *boutonnière* and her rich brogue falls easily on the ear after a surfeit of transatlantic and mid-Atlantic (Irish pseudo-American) accents. When the episodes in which she and a talented team of supporting actors become involved are played against an authentic Yankee background there is interest as well as entertainment in this peculiar mixture of fun and guide-book. Jeannie has probably shown the British public more of America than the more obviously pedagogic eye-openers of Joseph C. Harsch.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



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Reg'd at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper. Entered as 2nd-class Mail Matter at the New York, N.Y., P.O., 1903. Postage of this issue: Gt. Britain and Ireland 2d.; Canada 1d.* Elsewhere Overseas 2d.† Mark Wrapper top left-hand corner "Canadian Magazine Post" *Printed Papers—Reduced Rate.†

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